

TROUT UNLIMITED MINNESOTA

The Official Publication of Minnesota Trout Unlimited - February 2017



**GREAT WATERS
FLY FISHING EXPO**
Presented By Minnesota Trout Unlimited

March 17th-19th, 2017 • Tickets on Sale Now!

- Fishing Mill Creek
- Book Review - Young Men and Fire
- Fly Fishing the BWCAW
- The Secrets of Tying Jerk Flies
- Float Tubing NE MN Trout Lakes
- The History of Brown Trout in SE MN

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ON THE COVER

Fly casting on a Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Lake. Read more about the BWCAW, the fishing paradise it offers and the many threats facing it beginning on page 4. Hansi Johnson photo.

IN THIS ISSUE

- The Art of Rod Building
- Fishing the Boundary Waters
- Fishing the Mill Creek
- Secrets of Streamer Tying
- And much more!

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MINNESOTA COUNCIL UPDATE

Here Comes the Expo! Again!

By JP Little, Minnesota Council Chair

Welcome to the 2017 winter Minnesota Trout Unlimited statewide newsletter. This big, bountiful, glorious edition is coming out in advance of the 2017 Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo, which again is going to be operated by our esteemed editor Carl Haensel and co-operator Jade Thomason on behalf of the Minnesota State Council. This is the only fundraiser MNTU runs over the course of a year and is a critical source of revenue. Please plan to attend sometime during March 17th-19th at Hamline University (and bring some friends!).

As the days grow longer and we start the steady trek toward spring, chapters

across the state are already planning what stream projects will be done over the next couple of years. I have been busy signing contracts for projects utilizing Lessard-Sams project dollars, and we will again have the opportunity to improve miles of streams across Minnesota. Thanks again to our Executive Director John Lenczewski for driving these activities across the entire state, and for the local volunteers for contributing time and sweat equity to improving our coldwater resource.

This will be my last column as the State Chairman. After seven years I will be passing the baton to Steve Carlton, currently State Vice Chairman, at the spring



State Council meeting. I have enjoyed presiding over a wonderfully productive time for MNTU, serving with many dedicated, long-time TU volunteers. I bid you adieu, not farewell!

Tight Lines!

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A GROUP PHOTO OF 45 OF THE 55 VOLUNTEERS WHO CAME OUT TO HELP REMOVE INVASIVE BUCKTHORN FROM ALONG THE VERMILION RIVER LAST OCTOBER WITH TCTU. EFFORTS LIKE THIS ARE VITAL FOR OUR WORK. THANKS VOLUNTEERS!

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Another Busy Legislative Session in Minnesota

By John Lenczewski, MNTU Executive Director

MNTU is busy navigating the opportunities and perils which each Legislative session presents. This spring we will be busy trying to secure needed revenue for DNR Fisheries management activities. The Fisheries does a good job with tight budgets, but even they can stretch a dollar only so far. Having worked with many area offices around the state, I can attest to the dedication and hard work of the vast majority of field staff. The DNR is our constant partner working to protect, restore and sustain coldwater fisheries. I hope you'll read our article on the proposed fee increases and support efforts to fund their work.

The Great Waters Expo is drawing nearer and lots of TU leaders are working hard to make this another success. We will again need many of you to volunteer a few hours that weekend to make things run smoothly. I and other MNTU leaders will be around all weekend and hope you will drop by the TU booths to swap fishing news, sign up to help on a stream

habitat day, or just say "hi". Most of us feel like kids in the candy store when attending the Expo. So many good seminars and vendors with casting help added in. In recognition of the festive atmosphere, we have opted to forego long conservation programs in favor of some short highlights at the end of purely fun talks. The idea is to quickly flag the most pressing conservation challenge threatening the type of fishing you just learned about and offer one or two small things you can do to help protect the fish and places we all hold dear. We'll keep you moving on to more fun, while giving you an opportunity to make a difference.

Our moderate winter seems to be rushing toward an early spring. I still have not found time at the tying vise, but the dripping roof will get me going. Enjoy the warmer fishing weather on the horizon and I hope to get your fishing reports at the Expo in March.

See you at the Expo!



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A BRIGHT WILD STEELHEAD AWAITS RELEASE ON A NORTH SHORE RIVER. LEARN MORE ABOUT MINNESOTA STEELHEAD, WHERE THEY LIVE AND HOW TO CATCH THEM AT UPCOMING CHAPTER MEETINGS! DETAILS ON PAGE 26.

EDITOR'S ANGLE

Calling All Anglers

By Carl Haensel, Editor

Want to play a role in keeping our streams healthy, protecting our fisheries and making sure that all of the resources that you personally cherish are available for generations? Then it's time to get involved with conservation mentoring.

If you truly care about the resources that are displayed here, then one of the best steps that you can take is to get more people involved. By sharing what you love and teaching how to explore and enjoy our resources, each and every one of you can introduce new anglers to the sport of fishing. When threats come to our streams, rivers and lakes, we need as many anglers as possible to step up and lend a hand. This could be "boots on the ground" conservation work, letter writing, calling, donating to an advocacy

campaign or one of many other opportunities. Without enough anglers, we are stopped short of many goals. Not every person needs to play a role in each effort, but with more people involved, everyone can have a part.

Check out the article in this issue on mentoring, and consider attending the mentoring session at the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo. Get involved and introduce a friend or family member, or help out with one of our programs. New anglers that you've helped create will be the backbone of the conservation movement in years to come. Without mentors, most of us would not have learned to fish or experienced many of the wonderful opportunities associated with fishing in the Upper Midwest.



FLY FISHING THE BOUNDARY WATERS

A Fly Fishing Experience of a Lifetime

By Steve Piragis Photos by Hansi Johnson



AN ANGLER CASTS FROM THE BOW OF A CANOE IN THE BOUNDARY WATERS CANOE AREA WILDERNESS.

Murray stepped out of the canoe with a great big smile on his face. He had fished the world, from Russia's Atlantic salmon rivers to Argentina and the taimen waters of Mongolia. It was only lunch time but his arm was tired from catching fish that morning, not just making long casts. That evening around the campfire, Murray talked about the day on Basswood Lake in our own Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. You could tell there was a more in his voice than just the usual "what a great day it was." Murray talked about the arm tiring fishing; fishing like he'd never had on any of the exotic trips he'd been privileged to take. But it was more, much more, about the Boundary Waters that may have brought a tear to his eye that evening. It was about the solitude, the quiet and the water so clean he drank it straight out of the lake that he spoke. When a world traveling attorney from Los Angeles gets a little choked up about a place like the western end of Basswood and the smallmouth bass fishing in some of the cleanest water in the world, you know it's a very special place.

The guide that day was Steve Eisenmenger. To Steve, who has hundreds of weeks of fishing on Basswood under his belt, this reaction was not unusual. Basswood has been a mecca for sportsmen and women for over a century. It is the iconic northwoods lake on the US/Canadian border downstream from the headwaters of the great Rainy

River. It's a rich ecosystem blessed with a dozen or so bays and arms carved by glaciers. Some are deep and bear lake trout water while others are muddy wild rice bays harvested by the Ojibway for centuries. The gravel bottom of so much of the lake is perfect habitat for the prize quarry of the fly angler, smallmouth bass.

I've had the great good fortune to work with some of the best guides in the Boundary Waters over our many years on outfitting canoe trips here in Ely. These are unusual men and women. They love the life of the guide despite the rigors of the occupation that is seasonal and intense. I think it's the stories like that of Murray that keeps the job refreshing and vital. We all react to the emotion of others and when we show someone else a life changing experience like that which wilderness can bring, we share that happiness.

Other clients of Eisenmenger's were Bob and his son Ken from Long Island. Bob came every summer for many years. He brought his son Ken with him when he was likely in his mid-70's. It turned out to be his last trip up to the canoe country and Ken's first. For years Bob fished the lakes and streams of northern Maine. They fished with Steve over the waters Steve knew so well around Washington Island, US Point and Ranger Bay. They caught enough fish to make Ken a believer and the fried northern pike for dinner tasted so much better than any seafood in the Hamptons, especially since they

caught the pike on a fly rod after a long scrappy fight. It was the last morning of the trip before they had to catch the tow boat back to civilization and Bob could not believe what was to transpire. Ken hooked up mid-morning with a bass with the fight of which they were not familiar. The dad was duly proud of his son who landed the first smallmouth he had ever seen over 20 inches long. A few photos and a little celebrating as this queen of the canoe country swam back to the depths and Ken was back at the cast. Of course, the story goes that on very next cast there was another boil of water over the popper and yet another 20 plus inch was on the line. There is nothing like this in Maine, maybe nothing like it anywhere in natural lakes around the world. Bob was then the next happy angler to shed a few tears of joy for his lucky boy and the experience of a fishing lifetime.

I think we all recognize that the sport of fly fishing is way more than just the fish. If the fishing is from a canoe in the heart of Boundary Waters canoe country, there's even more magic to soak up. In my 40 or so years living in Ely the sport has grown to support several guides and bring in anglers from around the country and around the world. Much of the canoe country's waters are still being discovered for fly fishing. Like the peaks of the arctic, there are many first ascents to be had. From my experience in my favorite and not to be named Boundary Waters lake, there are smallmouth and northern pike and even walleye on tight lines right through the summer and into

fall.

Basswood is no doubt not the only lake where a fly angler can have this kind of fun but it is among the easiest to access. With some planning, a paddler can arrive in Ely for breakfast get packed up at his outfitter, meet the guide and be on the water by noon paddling to a wilderness campsite. The access to the iconic west end of Basswood has motor access from Moose Lake via tow boat service up a chain of lakes and over Prairie Portage to Basswood, then down the big lake to Washington Island where the motorized zone ends. With no portages to haul over, the fly rod can be unpacked and a fly in the water that same afternoon. Want to go farther and deeper into the wild? Paddle to the outlet of Basswood and portage the 1 mile Horse Portage and end up at another legendary fishing location: Crooked Lake.

Campsites in the BWCAW can be as comfortable as the team occupying them can conceive. If the trip is for 5 days, as many are, a guide will set up a bug free dining tarp with no see-em proof netting. Bring comfortable chairs. Cook over the fire to get the oil hot in a cast iron griddle to fry up the walleye fillets as the sun goes down and the loon chorus comes on line. Sleeping on the ground these days is nearly as good as your bed at home with invention of chambered air mattresses by Nemo and Exped. Need a shower? A camp shower is not an extravagance on a fishing trip. Lay out

the water bag on the rocks to soak up solar power all day and shower when you come in from fishing. A cocktail before dinner sitting around fire with friends and stories to share beats dinner in any fancy restaurant.

How to Fish The Boundary Waters

Every fly guide seems to have a favorite way to fish. Steve Eisenmenger likes the crayfish he ties. It's simple and it models the main prey of smallmouth bass almost all summer long. Bob from Long Island fished exclusively with a frog patterned popper. Most fly anglers I know use some version of the woolly bugger and let it sink over the fish, retrieving slowly towards the bottom where even a walleye can pick it up. My fishing partner on multiple day trips over a few years has only used one fly: a chartreuse or white Clouser minnow. We've managed to land the grand slam on a couple days of bass, walleye and northern with the Clouser. I keep the bow angled to the shore or over a reef and my bow man brings home the bacon. Just a hint when fishing from a canoe and the big one lunges for the fly, don't get too excited and tip 'er over.

It's canoe country so the fishing is best from a stable canoe. We almost always choose the Wenonah Spirit II 17 foot Kevlar ultralight canoe. The bow is broad and flared so there is room to spare and the canoe holds all the gear any twosome could ever need for a week of camping. On day trips the Spirit at just 42 pounds lets us single portage in and out and enjoy one cold beer from the cooler at the end of the day. Carbon fiber paddles are miraculously tough and weigh just 8 ounces. Logistics: Ely is about 4 hours north of the Twin Cities and in the heart of The Canoe Country. Land a walleye sandwich at the Chocolate Moose or a gourmet meal at Burntside Lodge. For a

good night's rest before your trip, A Stay in Ely is across the street from our outfitting company and Northern Grounds coffee and wine bar just opened at the other end of the block. Outfitters can arrange guides, permits, camping gear, canoes and tow service to the fishing waters. Bring a camera and your fishing gear and we'll have you on the water fishing by noon. I always recommend 5 day trips or longer. The relaxation and presence of mind that wilderness brings, takes a day or two to set in.

The best smallmouth bass fishing is in June but it remains way above average all summer long. Northern pike are ubiquitous, far ranging and voracious in every month of the summer. Walleyes are a bit easier to catch earlier in the summer but we have also found them in 3 feet of water in August. Permits to the Boundary Waters are divvied up by entry point. Basswood Lake entry requires a Moose Lake entry permit. Tow service is offered through outfitters. Planning early never hurts for busy weeks of the summer and holiday weekends. Come catch the magic!

Editors Note: Steve Piragis is owner, along with his wife Nancy, of Piragis Northwood Company, a company of canoe trip outfitters and guides in Ely, MN. Find them online at www.piragis.com or look for their ad on page 21 of this issue.

Basswood Lake lies immediately downstream from a proposed sulfide ore copper mine just outside the Boundary Waters. Steve Piragis and other local Ely citizens have organized a campaign to fight for clean water. For more information see www.savetheboundarywaters.org. You can also visit the booth for Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters at the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo this March 17-19 and look for issue updates from MNTU as we move forward with addressing these challenges to our northern waterways.



SEARCHING FOR FISH WITH A FLY IN THE BWCAW



A SELECTION OF BOUNDARY WATERS FLIES.
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT AND TOP TO BOTTOM IN THREE COLUMNS:
COLUMN 1: DEER HAIR FROG, CHARTREUSE CLOUSER, RED/WHITE DECEIVER,
COLUMN 2: WHITE SLIDER, HARD POPPER, SWIMMING BAITFISH
COLUMN 3: CRAYFISH, RUBBER LEGGED CRAYFISH, RUBBER LEGGED BUGGER,
WOOLLY BUGGER, LEECH BIG AND UGLY



MORNING MIST ON THE WATER OF A BOUNDARY WATERS LAKE

FISHING OUR HABITAT WORK: MILL CREEK

Excellent Accessibility and Brown Trout in SE Minnesota

By Paul Krolak

Mill Creek is a tributary of the North Branch of the Root River, running generally south from its headwaters below Interstate 90. The stream crosses from the east side of a broad valley towards the west side at the junction of Olmsted County Rd 137 and US52, then follows the west side of the valley towards, and then through the city of Chatfield and on to the North Branch of the Root.

the new easement.

Downstream from the unrestored reach is an HTU/MNTU project completed in 2013, which is over a mile in length. Continuing downstream from the 2013 work is the latest HTU/MNTU project, completed in 2016, covering around two miles of stream. At the downstream end of that project starts MN DNR work, a pasture reach with skyhooks, which takes you all the way down the MN30.

Before the restoration project, there were scattered spots of habitat, with shallow and silty sections in between. Box elders and willows dominated. Where they didn't, thick patches of reed canary grass made walking difficult, and exciting, should you happen to stumble onto an occupied wild turkey nest like I did one afternoon.

The restoration goal was to lower and slope the banks, narrow the stream to

as well.

Above that, you'll find a variety of pools, bends, riffles, and runs. A farm road parallels the stream through the upper two thirds of the project, but the stream often curves off towards the bluff side on the west of the stream. Where it falls within the angling easement the road does help make walking easier. In the winter it's a snowmobile trail and caution is advised.

An experimental restoration approach in



GENTLY SLOPED BANKS ARE SEEDED AND COVERED IN EROSION CONTROL FABRIC AFTER INITIAL GRADING AND CHANNEL WORK IN THE PHOTO ON THE LEFT. A YEAR LATER, NATIVE VEGETATION THRIVES IN AUGUST OF 2016 AFTER COMPLETED RESTORATION WORK ON MILL CREEK IN THE PHOTO ON THE RIGHT.

While many folks cross Mill on their way to more storied streams, Mill Creek is definitely worth a visit. There is a considerable amount of angler access and restoration work, as well as a willing population of browns, with an occasional rainbow that has traveled up from stockings in Chatfield.

You can find Mill Creek on Map 4 of the DNR's 2015 Trout Angling Opportunities map book or from the MNDNR's Lanesboro Fisheries web page. This map shows the latest updates to the angling easements on all streams. There are now angling easements from about ½ mile upstream of the US 52 Bridge all the way to MN 30 – a distance of over four contiguous stream miles. Within that span of eased stream there are four restoration projects and an unrestored segment.

Upstream from US 52 is an Hiawatha Trout Unlimited (HTU)/MNTU project completed in 2011, accessed from County 137. The newest easement runs about three fourths of a mile downstream from US 52, and shows what the project areas looked like before restoration: high banks and box elder. There is a bridge on Spring Rd that can be used to access

To legally access the latest project from the intersection of MN 30 and US 52, travel about two tenths of a mile west on MN 30, crossing Mill Creek, and turn north on Mill Creek Road SE. Continue about four tenths of a mile until you reach a westward bend in the road, where you'll see the snowmobile bridge and several stiles. There's room to pull off the road to park, but in the winter be sure not to block the snowmobile trail approaches to the bridge. In all seasons please be respectful of the homes, field entrances and driveways.

To get to the stream, you can use a stile or cross to the other side over the bridge, but I usually stick to the stiles and start fishing upstream along the west side of the stream.

Mill is narrow enough that wading isn't really required to fish it as you can reach what you need to from either bank. If the water is cloudy or murky – as it often is following heavier rains – don't assume the water near the bank is shallow, as you could be in for a bit of a cold surprise. I tend to cross the stream at shallow riffles or farm crossings along the project, and stay out of the stream as much as possible.

appropriate dimensions, and retain the existing good spots of habitat where we could, while adding in habitat where none existed. Hundreds of trees, tree trunks with root wads, and tons of rock were turned into habitat for trout, baitfish and macroinvertebrates.

Rather than locking the stream channel in place with rock, jute erosion control fabric and wood stakes protect the banks from damage while the diverse mix of

one wider and slower section added in revetments composed of cedar boughs and trees cabled to the stream bed with duckbill anchors. The branches and boughs will catch sediment, eventually gathering enough soil and debris to narrow the stream, while providing cover for insects and fish. The revetments have already survived a number of high water events and appear to be gathering sediment and debris.



ANOTHER SCENIC SECTION OF MILL CREEK AFTER COMPLETED WORK FUNDED BY THE LESSARD-SAMS OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUND

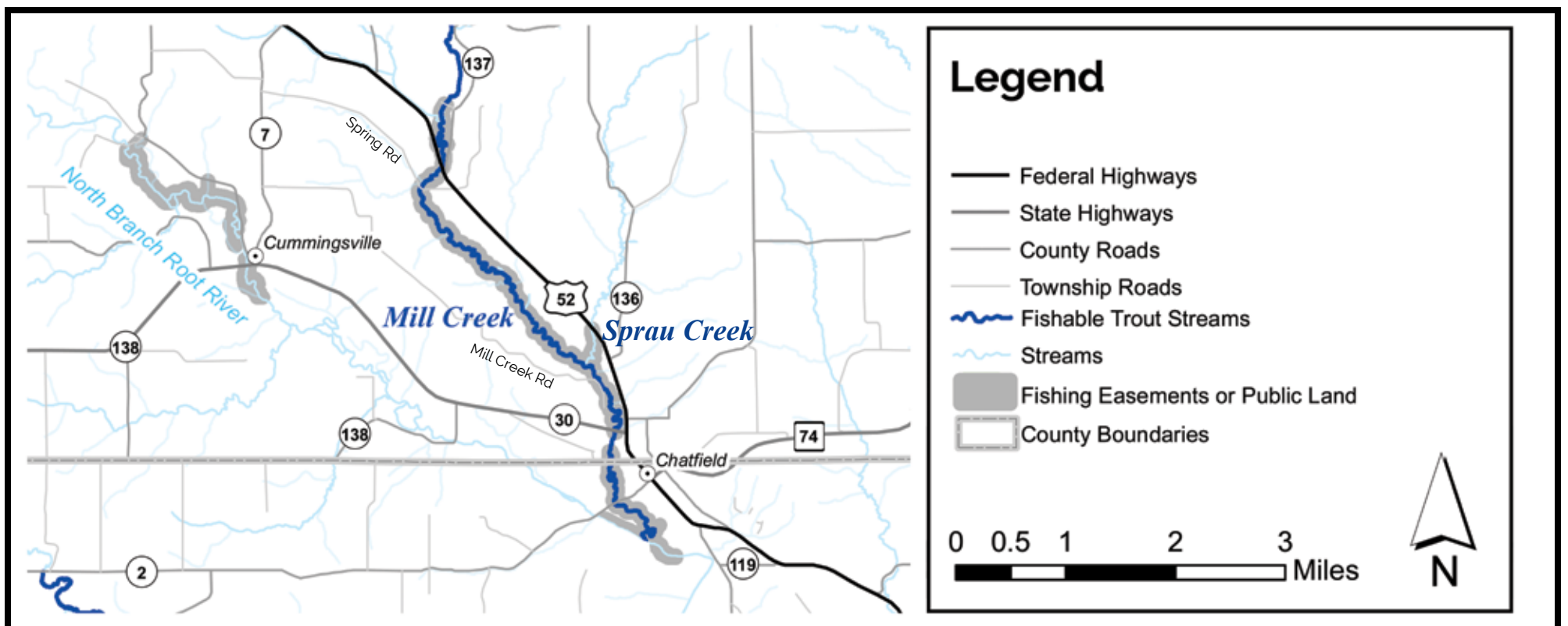
grasses and forbs grow in. Most of the project was completed and seeded in late summer 2015, with a new channel bypassing a highly eroded section opened in 2016. The now bypassed bend, which was going to be cut off from the stream, functions as non-game wildlife habitat.

The first several hundred yards upstream from the bridge are fairly sinuous with a number of sharp bends with rock and log cover, as well as riffles and larger cover rock. Sprau Creek, managed for brook trout by the DNR, comes in from the east

Mill Creek tends to be on the warm side for a trout stream and, like similar streams, that means lots of baitfish. That also tends to indicate there may be some larger trout that like to eat them, so try throwing a streamer, especially in low light, fall, or if there's a tinge to the water. One cloudy/misty afternoon this past summer, with the stream running cloudy from recent rains, I hooked a number of browns larger than 12" (and landed a smaller number, unfortunately) working a weighted black bunny strip streamer along a stretch with wood and



A BADLY ERODED REACH OF MILL CREEK PRIOR TO RESTORATION



MOST OF MILL CREEK IS ACCESSIBLE BY A MN DNR FISHING EASEMENT AND IS OFTEN WITHIN A SHORT WALK OF THE ROAD. MAP COURTESY OF THE MN DNR.

rock cover built into the bank of the stream.

In the summer, if you do start catching chubs, you're probably in a section that's too warm or slow for trout. Move a few yards up or downstream, and you'll find cooler water. I've had plenty of success with caddis patterns in pupae, emerger or dry forms. Drifting or swinging an elk hair caddis in the warmer months will often be productive even if there aren't a lot of bugs in the air. The typical midge, mayfly and scud patterns should work as well on Mill as they do elsewhere in the area.

In late summer and fall I've had fun with grasshopper patterns splatted down in the riffles, drifted or skated across the current.

As the substrate of the streams flushes and cleans itself it'll be interesting to see how the mayfly population responds. Where there were long silty sections, there are now riffles and cleaner substrates, so there's hope for increased populations.

You won't find pure solitude on Mill Creek as US 52 is just a few hundred yards off, and you might occasionally hear a PA announcement at the implement dealer or catch a whiff of the fryer at the nearby Dairy Queen, but there's enough stream for a whole day's worth of fishing. You'll also find Mill Creek a good spot for a quick hour or two of easy-access fishing... with the DQ just a few minutes away.



A HEALTHY BROWN TROUT FROM MILL CREEK



"Like winds and sunsets, wild things were taken for granted until progress began to do away with them. Now we face the question whether a still higher 'standard of living' is worth its cost in things natural, wild and free."
Aldo Leopold

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A FLY FISHING GOLD MINE IN THE ARROWHEAD

Fishing for Trout in NE Minnesota's Designated Stream Trout Lakes

By Phil Vieth

Northeastern and central Minnesota hide a gold mine of trout fishing opportunities that are relatively undiscovered and untapped by fly fishers: state designated stream trout lakes.

These are small, cold lakes that the MNDNR stocks with trout normally found in streams, such as brook trout, rainbow trout and brown trout, with some hybrids like splake (male brook trout crossed with female lake trout) thrown in for good measure.

They are hard to reach and subsequently hardly fished, according to MNDNR Stream Habitat Coordinator Brian Nerbonne. Some may see only one or two anglers a summer. That can mean trophy trout.

There are 102 of these stream trout lakes in Cook and Lake counties alone! Some of these lakes are so remote, the MNDNR stocks fish by using float planes, or by hiking in with Duluth packs filled with trout. Other lakes are close to good roads. Larger lakes, such as Trout Lake, Kimball Lake, Birch Lake and Ester Lake, have launching access for small boats, but most don't have boat ramps. Some others, such as Mink Lake in Cook County, have fishing piers.

However, about 20 of these lakes are on trails and poor roads in the Superior National Forest that are not conducive to driving without four-wheel drive, or an ATV. Still others are in the BWCA Wilderness, where you'll have to hike, canoe and portage to them.

Many shorelines are difficult to fish from, so the best way to fish these lakes

is with a float tube, small pontoon boat, or kayak. A small, light, canoe can be used, but it is easily blown around if there is a wind. I use one-man pontoon boats, but they are bigger and harder to haul. However, they are very nice to fish from, especially on bigger lakes.

A float tube is my first choice to access the more remote lakes. I built a float tube hauler that makes it easier to get my float tube, waders, fins etc. to the lake, instead of carrying everything on my back. My hauler started as bicycle frame with just the front wheel and handles. I can place my inflated float tube, waders and other gear on it. Then I easily roll it along an old road or trail to the lakeside, where I take off my hiking boots, put on my gear, and go fishing.

After a day out on the lake, when it is getting dark, I kick toward shore. I take my rod apart out on the lake and get ready to take off my fins. As I hit shallow water, off comes the fins, off come the waders, I pile up my gear, and I am ready to head up the trail.

You'll need a trout stamp on your license to fish stream trout lakes. Other regulations vary. Some stream trout lakes require catch-and-release, up to a size limit, to preserve trophy-size trout. Others have regular inland regulations. Using live bait is prohibited due to the potential introduction of minnow species that are not desirable for these lakes.

The stream trout in these lakes feed readily on streamers and other flies as the season progresses. This is especially true for rainbow trout, which are opportunists. They seem to cruise just under the surface and feed on terrestrial insects that are blown onto the water due to



PHIL VIETH'S FLOAT TUBE HAULER - A BIG BENEFIT ON HARD-TO-REACH WATERS

wind, such as ants, beetles etc. Pay attention to where the wind might blow bugs from the nearby shoreline, and to the other end of the lake where wind-blown insects might collect.

These lakes have a variety of mayflies, including the giant *Hexagenia limbata* species. These are the mayflies that hatch in such profusion that MNDOT has used snow plows to clear bug-body-slickened river bridges, where the lights have attracted clouds of the big mayflies. When the Hex hatch is on, fish gorge themselves. Even after the famed Hex hatch is over on these stream trout lakes, rainbows seem to be looking for large dry flies. I have seen rainbows "porpoise," breaking the surface to come down on surface flies, several weeks after that hatch. Early summer, when the mosquitoes and black flies are a problem, is also when there is good fishing.

With no surface activity, a heavy sinking tip fly line and weighted nymphs seems to work. "Trolling" in your float tube by slowly kicking your feet and dragging your fly line seems best for this type of rig.

Winter is an excellent time to dream about visiting these remote lakes. Some will take a little research and inquiry to figure out how to reach, and the information is sometimes sketchy, but this is a challenge that adds to the reward of making it there.

You also can find out stocking information from the MNDNR, along with when a lake was "rehabilitated." These small, cold, infertile lakes don't support other gamefish of any size, so those fish were cleared out and trout were stocked. From this information you can narrow the lakes to the most productive, with the species and size of fish you prefer.

Even if you don't catch a trophy, it is an intriguing and interesting process to identify, determine the best access, and finally launch a float tube into these great fly fishing lakes.

Local Resources

Scott Sorenson is the owner of Fly Box & Company in Grand Marais and a longtime supporter of Trout Unlimited. He offers a guide service, rental, hand-tied, still-water fishing flies and, even better, good advice.

Scott says if you want to trade up from a float tube, you might consider rigid pontoon kick boats. They are more durable and you can use fins and oars. They come in a variety of sizes, move more efficiently through the water, and provide a more stable platform for casting. As for pumps, he likes the K-Pump. It's portable, comes in various sizes, has no hoses, is durable, and is made in the USA.

He says the Hex hatch typically happens from the last week of June through the first week of July in his area of Cook County. Call him to find out what's hatching when, and for advice: 218-370-9659, or go to his website: www.flyboxmn.com.

MNDNR Info: Designated stream trout lakes: http://dnr.state.mn.us/fishing/trout_lakes/list.html

Clicking on the lake name brings you to its Lakefinder page with stocking history, survey results, depth contour maps, and a description of how to access the lake. You also can look at maps showing the location of designated trout lakes at http://dnr.state.mn.us/fishing/trout_streams/northeast.html

You also can contact the MNDNR Area Fisheries office in Grand Marais and Finland, MN and ask about a lake you might be interested in.

Once you've settled on a lake or two, you can plan your overland assault using maps from the Superior National Forest (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/superior/maps-pubs>). Motor vehicle use maps can give you an idea of which logging roads might still be drivable, or not. Officials also warn you to print the maps and know how to use a compass with one. Cell phone service is unreliable in many areas.



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MORE FLOAT TUBE CONSIDERATIONS

Here are some of my personal thoughts on float tubes, also called belly boats or kick boats. Don't take these as endorsements, just thoughts, and you can always do more research online on your own.

I have never had an emergency with my inflatables, but one does need to be aware of the potential for deflation and always wear a personal flotation device. I wear an inflatable life vest because it is less bulky and more comfortable. If you are wearing an inflatable vest, make sure you put it on the outside of your jacket, so it can fully inflate and not get trapped.

A desirable safety feature is a float tube with more than one air chamber. A second air chamber as a backrest will help in case the main tube deflates.

The inflator design is important. The tubes with the hard plastic caps built right into the float tube seem less likely to leak or come loose after you're inflated and on the water. I prefer that over a plastic inflator tube that extends out from the body of the tube with a cap on the end of it. I use a foot pump to inflate my tube, the bigger the better. Make sure that the nozzle on your pump will work with your float tube valves. I've had to retrofit some of mine to ensure that they work well.

Some float tubes are definitely lighter than others, so if you want to walk in to more remote lakes, a lighter tube will be easier to haul. However, the heavier ones are more durable. The float tube I use is a Fish Cat. It is a little heavier than some other brands due to the seat being more padded. The styrofoam un-

der the seat tends to bend so I have put a thin piece of plywood under the foam to increase rigidity which has added to the weight. The newer or more expensive Fish Cats might not have that problem.

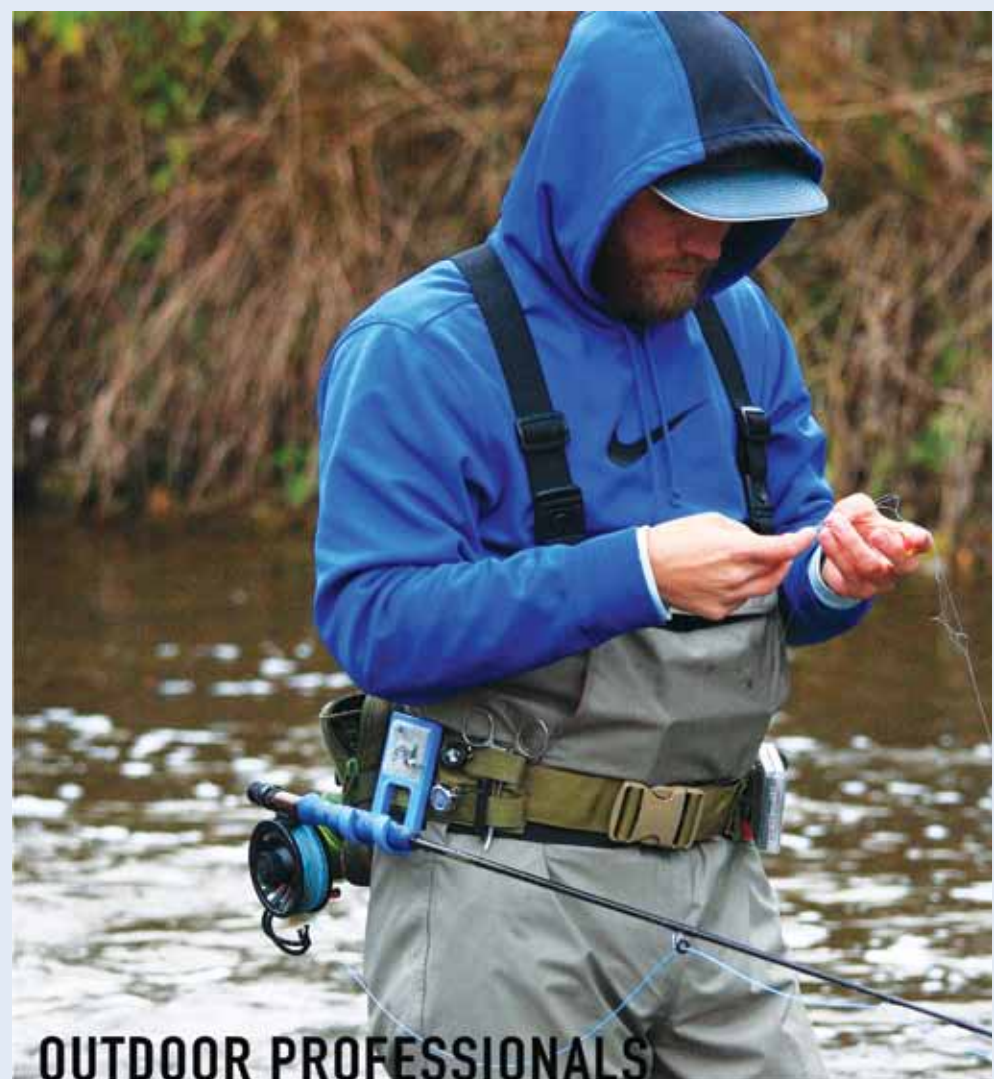
Another consideration is shape and the "U" shaped float tubes are much easier to get into and out of than fully round tubes. You also sit higher, making it easier to cast. A longer fly rod also helps with this.

When you use a float tube, you use swim fins on your feet and kick, which propels you backward. The fins can be any type but they should fit over your wader boots. Your boots should be somewhat flexible for comfortable kicking; I wear a bigger size tennis shoe over my waders instead of a wading boot. I use fins with plastic side buckles, which seem easier to unbuckle and take off. Your fins should preferably float but if they don't, have some way of putting a 'keeper' on them so you don't lose them when they fall off.

A real trick with standard fins is once you put them on your feet you can't walk forward and you have to walk backwards. Put your tube in shallow water behind you, don your fins, then pick up your tube and move backward into deeper water until you can sit down on the seat. When walking to the lake, or getting in the tube, be careful to avoid snagging your rod tip on surrounding vegetation. Hold the rod up in the air. The voice of experience is speaking here.

One other tip from experience: let some air out of your inflatable after fishing if it's going to be sitting in the sun, or in the back of a hot vehicle. Otherwise, it might burst. It's amazing how hot air expands so much.

One other "hack" comes from TCTU's Dan Callahan: A float tube anchor on a retractable clothesline is useful when you don't want the wind to blow you away from a good spot.



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MINNESOTA DNR SEEKS FEE INCREASES

General Fund Increases Are Also Warranted

By John Lenczewski



A MN DNR FISHERIES CREW CONDUCTING AN ELECTROFISHING SURVEY. THIS IS ONE OF MANY DNR MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES THAT NEEDS BETTER FUNDING.

Declining purchasing power will begin to negatively impact anglers and hunters in 2018 unless additional revenue is raised for Fish & Wildlife Division management activities. The DNR has proposed to increase the price of an annual resident fishing license by \$3 to prevent this from happening. While MNTU and other fishing focused groups are supportive of the increase, many feel that general tax dollars are also justified and are overdue.

Game and Fish Fund

The primary fund that pays for DNR fish and wildlife management activities is the state's Game & Fish Fund ("the Fund" or "GFF"). Fund revenue comes primarily from the sale of fishing, hunting and related licenses and stamps, as well as federal excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment. In 2011-2012 the DNR sought its first general fishing license fee increase in a decade. The 2012 Legislature approved a fee increase, but \$2 less than the DNR had requested. The approved increase has generated enough revenue to keep fisheries management activities funded, but rising costs mean the Fund will go into the red in 2019. Due to complexities of state budgeting law and a prohibition against deficit spending, action must be taken soon or the DNR will have to reduce costs by delaying or cancelling habitat and research projects, reducing fish stocking efforts, and reducing biological surveys needed for informed management decisions.

Minnesota has a citizen oversight committee which reviews DNR expenditures from the Game & Fish Fund to ensure appropriate spending. The Game and Fish Fund Budgetary Oversight Committee ("BOC") consists of approximately 25 anglers and hunters who meet regularly from December to June. One of their charges is to monitor the long term health of the Fund.

long term solvency of the Fund led the BOC to press the DNR for action in its latest report. The report can be found at: <http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/gamefishoversight/2016-boc-report.pdf>

The report summarizes the situation as follows:

"The BOC is increasingly concerned with the long term health of the Game and Fish Fund ("GFF"). Based upon detailed information presented by DNR staff and discussions with them, it appears that the GFF has a structural deficit which will reach \$6.1 million in 2016-17, with an additional shortfall of \$3.3 million per year thereafter. This deficit appears to be due primarily to inflationary pressures and higher costs of doing business as an agency (MNIT, facility costs, vehicle fleet, radio equipment fleet, computer equipment fleet, etc.), as well as increased spending, including increased staff time and effort managing the Mille Lacs Lake walleye fishery.

The BOC finds that the current level of services provided by the DNR is the minimal amount necessary to adequately manage Minnesota's fish and game populations and their aquatic and terrestrial habitats. The current level of effort cannot be reduced without dire consequences for our natural resources and the millions of Minnesotans who rely upon them for recreation and economic livelihood. Since the level of expenditures cannot be significantly reduced from FY 2015 levels without unacceptably large negative impacts for anglers, hunters, rural economies and a host of other resource users, additional revenue is needed soon in order to prevent the GFF from "going negative." . . .

The BOC recommends that the following measures be taken now to ensure a sustained increase in revenues into the Fund prior to the start of FY 2019:

• The DNR should develop a compre-

hensive package of license fee increases for fishing, hunting, ice shelter, and the like, which will ensure the solvency of the GFF for the next decade, without a reduction in the level of management effort. The DNR should strive to ensure that revenue from fishing and fishing related license fees is sufficient to cover projected expenditures for fisheries management. The package of fee changes should be developed and presented to the BOC by December 2016.

• To cover the costs of walleye management in Mille Lacs Lake and elsewhere, the DNR and the Legislature should take action to either (a) make the purchase of the walleye stamp mandatory for all anglers keeping walleyes and expand the permissible uses of stamp proceeds to cover all aspects of walleye management or (b) increase all annual fishing licenses by an amount which would raise an equivalent amount of revenue.

• The DNR should propose an increase in the fees for various permits, such as for aquatic plant management, fishing tournaments, and aquaculture, to ensure that the fees cover the DNR's actual expenses of managing these activities, and the Legislature should enact these fee increases.

• The Legislature should return to its former practice of making some general fund appropriations to the GFF.

In January 2017 the DNR revealed its package of proposed fee increases. Unfortunately it did not request any general fund dollars for the Fish & Wildlife Division. A number of fees would rise, but the bulk of the increase for fisheries activities would come from raising the resident annual license from \$21 to \$24. \$24 is a bargain for a year of fishing and most of us drop more than \$3 at the gas station convenience store every time out. MNTU supports this \$3 increase in order to protect and improve our fisheries re-

sources, but believes it is time the Legislature return to its long standing practice of providing general funds as well.

Strong Case for General Funds

Angling and hunting activities are an economic engine for Minnesota's economy. Together they annually generate nearly \$5.5 billion in economic activity in the state, support 48,000 jobs and collect \$358 million in state and local sales tax (2011 data). Wildlife viewing related spending adds another \$1.1 billion in economic activity. Surely the DNR management activities needed to ensure the continued health of the natural resources, which generate this \$6.6 billion in economic impact, should not fall solely on the shoulders of anglers and hunters. Until recently, the Legislature acknowledged this and appropriated at least some general funds for Fish & Wildlife Division activities. Between July 2001 and July 2010, Legislative appropriations of general funds for the Fish & Wildlife Division averaged approximately \$2.3 million per year. Since 2011 general fund appropriations have been essentially zero, although \$350,000 was appropriated in 2015 to combat avian flu. Data for 2000 and earlier years was not available when this article went to print.

Healthy ecosystems and clean lakes and streams benefit all Minnesotans. It is only fair that all citizens should contribute something to manage and improve these resources. While MNTU supports the proposed fishing license fee increase of \$3, we believe it is time once again for all citizens to contribute via general fund appropriations to the Game & Fish Fund. Ask your legislators to support both general fund appropriations as well as the proposed fishing related fee increases proposed by DNR.

THE ART OF CUSTOM ROD BUILDING

The Process Behind Creating a Truly Custom Rod

By Kris Kristufek

Most fishing rods sold today are built for the average angler, one who enjoys being on the water and hopefully catching a fish or two. Commercial manufacturers focus on this average angler to mass produce products that appear on sporting goods shelves and racks. They basically are all the same, especially within a particular product line of length, action, power and maybe, more importantly, with the materials used to construct these goods.

A custom fishing rod from yesteryear used to be a sign of affluence. Today, all of that is exceeded by form and function. A true custom rod will nev-



AUTHOR KRIS KRISTUFEK EXAMINES A CUSTOM ROD THAT HE HAS BUILT

er be found in a sporting goods store. Each must be built to the exact specification of the angler, not the industry average as noted above. One would never consider purchasing a pair of “custom” shoes without first being interviewed, then measured, and ultimately choosing the materials that will be used. A true custom fishing rod is no different.

There are several hundred, if not a thousand or more rod blank models manufactured in domestic rod factories in North America. A boat-load more are made offshore. The processes used vary from manufacturer to manufacturer and the quality of the raw material, the fabric of the rod, etc. varies widely. Sure, there is some specific machinery used in these factories, but the start of the process is always done by hand. The process of tacking the scrim material to the mandrel is one that no machine can accomplish. The cutting of this scrim material is another variable where some factories use a straight edge and a box cutter to make the parts. Others use computer operated cutting machines to make redundant identical parts. Resin formulas and curing systems likewise may vary greatly.

Because of this intricate start of the process, differences in quality are huge, as is the market price of high-end produced products. It takes exactly the

same amount of time to build out a rod on an inexpensive, poorly built blank as it does to build on a one that truly will outperform anything else.

Before we begin to weigh-in on the “why does a custom rod cost more?” question, let’s make one thing clear. Both manufactured rods and custom rods will help you catch more fish. The differences in these tools is great, however. Let’s dive in to these differences.

Quality raw materials simply cost more. The engineering processes used to produce high modulus, light weight carbon fiber scrim materials and the bonding resins to keep the fibers in line continue to be refined by chemists and engineers. Advertising claims such as “50% lighter and 100% more durable” are not subjective statements and are carefully tested with measurement tools. Today’s carbon fiber materials are produced from space-age aeronautical materials. The fishing industry is fortunate to be a benefactor. The same is true with the bonding resins where microscopic silica marbles are impregnated into special resins to take up space, but have the bonding properties necessary to make a structurally solid light-weight part.

There are only four or five blank manufacturers that pay special attention to their high-end product line with these ultra high quality, very expensive raw materials. And fewer of them have the necessary testing equipment to maintain incredible tolerances and measure each part against off-specification defects. The end result means that these products or parts will cost more, but the benefits outweigh the cost differences.

Simple things that cause rejection are blanks that twist when stressed or have dog-legged tips, flaws in the tape or step down, or worse, when manufacturers fail to make a straight line when tacking the scrim to the mandrel in the first place. Again, experience has proven that low end, low priced rod blanks may vary greatly with quality and there is no consistency within a model series.

Before the build-out process begins, the custom builder will consult and interview the angler for exactly what they want in their new fishing rod. The time necessary to understand exactly what species and techniques will be used when fishing drive the selection of the parts to be used in the finished rod. Discriminating anglers demand much more than one-size-fits-all tools. Important issues such as what reel will be used determines what kind of reel seat will be necessary. Hand and arm measurements are necessary so the handle system fits like a glove and makes the outfit ergonomically comfortable. Rod length, action, and power enter the discussion, as does thread color, inscriptions and a lot more. It is not unusual to spend upwards of an hour in this interview process alone. A custom fishing rod is not, and cannot, be built for the average angler!



A JUNGLE COCK CAPE IS THE BACKGROUND FOR A FINISHED ROD BLANK HIGHLIGHTED BY JUNGLE COCK FEATHERS AND OTHER THREAD WRAPPINGS

The build out process continues with selection of handle materials with consideration to function, weight and comfort. These handle materials are carefully assembled in the builder’s rod shop, then shaped and finished as appropriate. Elliptical wood or cork inlays, checkerboards, metallic trim bands and more are all possible in handle systems. These are one of a kind handle systems that are not available in a catalog somewhere.

The builder will have determined in the interview process what kind of line guides will be used, then they will select highly engineered lightweight materials with ceramic inserts ground smooth as silk. Likely additional

which fine 2-part flexible epoxy finish seals the threads to the rod blank.

Finally, if requested by the owner, aesthetic artistic decoration can be added to the rod. Things like thread cross-wrapping, weaving, colorful thread allusions, feather inlays, exotic snake skin inlays, abalone shell inlays and other accents add to the beauty and value of the rod without sacrificing function.

The end result of all of this is a perfectly built and constructed fishing rod that is balanced to feel weightless in the hand, casts with accuracy with increased distance with the same amount of effort, and has been built to the exact specifications of the angler.



INTERESTING HARDWOODS, THREAD WRAPS AND MORE ARE DRESSING ON A SUCCESSFULLY BUILT CUSTOM ROD, WHICH DEPENDS ON QUALITY OF THE ROD BLANK, COMPONENTS AND GUIDE PLACEMENT TO ENSURE PEAK PERFORMANCE

guides will be used in the guide train of a custom rod than will be found in a manufactured rod, so there will be no sharp angles when the rod is placed under load. Guide placement stations are determined using tools and charts designed for equal angles between the guides when the parabolic rod is loaded under stress, then checked using a static distribution process to prove the locations. Each rod blank is different, thus mimicking charts prior produced are only long range guides to be considered. Then fine whipping threads designed for rod building will be used to attach the guides to the rod blank, after

Bottom line, of course, considering all of the above and more, the finished product will cost more than a similar manufactured rod. Anything custom takes time and expertise.

Editors Note: Kris Kristufek is a custom rod builder and designer based in Pequot Lakes, MN and is the owner of Lake Lady Custom-Crafted Fishing Rods. Look for his ad on page 21 for contact information and visit his web site at www.lakeladyrods.com to learn more.

NRRI STREAM TEMPERATURE STUDY UPDATE

Steelhead and Brook Trout in a North Shore Watershed

By Jonathan Utecht

The 2015 and 2016 in-stream temperature surveys provided a wide variety of information from streams as far north as the Canadian border and south to the Nemadji watershed area. Volunteers helped complete a significant number of stream temperature surveys to find many cool-water refuge locations. Some streams were more challenging than others and some had more cool-water refuges, but all surveys are vital to help us create models that will predict the location of other cool-water refuges. Ultimately, this information will help prioritize the future management of North Shore trout streams. In total, 121 stream segments were surveyed, and cool-water features were identified in 83 of the stream segments.

Of the segments that contained cool water locations, the size and number varied, with some containing only one refuge and others up to 23 in a single segment. Most of the cool-water features found were pools and seeps. However, Sergeant Creek near New Duluth had a long 80 ft. long seep area that registered temperatures as low as 5.8o C, a steep decline from its average 20o C stream temperature. Locating cool water locations allowed us to deploy continuous-logging temperature recorders in 32 stream segments to track the water temperature fluctuations throughout the summer and compare them to air temperatures.

Potential barriers were identified in 87 stream segments; 63 of these contained both barriers and cool-water refuges. Barriers varied in size, number, and type among the stream segments, but the types of barriers within any given stream segment were similar (e.g., some

segments had beaver dams, while others had rocky barriers, and others had woody debris barriers, etc.). The largest barriers were long shallow culverts or gigantic beaver dams.

In conjunction with the temperature surveys, crews from the Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) electrofished 59 of the 121 stream segments. The electrofishing sites were selected primarily based on presence/absence of stream cool-water features; in other words, we needed to fish some segments that did not have cool water even though we are mostly interested in the fish in the cool water segments. This will help the modelers. Electrofishing was conducted on both known brook trout streams and non-brook trout streams. Brook trout were found in 30 of the 59 segments electrofished. The size of the trout often depended on the size of stream, the substrate composition, and flow. Larger streams hosted the biggest trout, with the biggest brook trout measured a whopping 13.8 inches. This fell short of the nearly 18-inch brown trout, the largest of the season.

A data table summarizes temperature and electrofishing results by catchment ID for all surveys and is available online. Visit www.mntu.org for details and look for the Gitche Gume TU chapter information.

Future Plan

Now that field sampling is complete, modelers from NRRI and St. Anthony Falls Laboratory will use the data to predict locations of cool-water refuges from attributes such as geology, topography,



NRRI FIELD TECH JOSH MUTCHLER GETTING READY TO MEASURE A NICE BROOK TROUT FROM THE TEMPERANCE RIVER.

soils, etc. (which is why we had to locate sample reaches across the gradient of conditions along the entire north shore, not just those with known cold water features).

In the summer of 2017 field crews will validate the model's ability to predict stream segments that should have cool-water refuges by conducting in-stream temperature surveys similar to those conducted in 2015/2016. Ultimately, this information will be used to help understand how Northeastern Minnesota's trout streams are likely to fare under future climate change scenarios.

In addition to the stream temperature modeling, University of Minnesota Duluth Master's student Jon Utecht will analyze the distribution of barriers and cool-water refuges in the streams and evaluate the potential for barriers to impede a trout's ability to reach the refuges. The relationship between the condition and abundance of brook trout relative to the distribution of barriers and cool-water refuges will also be investigated.

The data and results from this study will provide managers with the tools to help make stream restoration and management decisions to protect and preserve trout streams in northeastern Minnesota.

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WILL THE MINNESOTA DNR KEEP FAITH WITH TROUT STAMP PURCHASERS?

By John Lenczewski

In 1982 Minnesota instituted a trout stamp, which is required for all anglers fishing designated trout streams and lakes. Trout anglers pushed hard for this stamp with the intention that the revenue raised by it be used to supplement the existing level of management effort directed at coldwater fisheries. Originally intended only for habitat protection (easement purchases), improvement work and increased stocking, allowable uses for these dedicated funds were later expanded. Allowable uses are detailed in Minnesota Statutes 97A.075, Subd. 3. Regardless of precise use, the intention of stamp purchasers and DNR Fisheries Section has been that these dedicated funds would be used only to supplement the traditional level of effort (dollars) directed at coldwater fisheries using general Fisheries Section dollars. There are

stamp funds to ensure their appropriate use. Over the past few years that committee has expressed concern that too few of the trout stamp funds were being spent to purchase additional trout stream easements or other added work, and instead the balance in this dedicated account was growing too large:

“The [trout stamp] fund balance continued to grow in FY 2015, despite the BOC’s recommendation last year that the account, “especially the large balance being carried forward over the past few years, be utilized for trout stream easements whenever opportunities for acquisitions in priority watersheds are available and might otherwise be delayed and/or lost due to interruptions in other funding sources.” . . . DNR has consistently stated that the amount

are not being spent for this purpose precisely when transient opportunities for purchasing these permanent protections might be lost due to needless funding delays. It appears that some opportunities to acquire trout stream easements are not being pursued in a timely fashion because of this unwillingness to expend available funds from the trout and salmon management account. Such lost opportunities are unacceptable.”

See pages 14 -15 of the Report at: <http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/gamefishoversight/2016-boc-report.pdf>

Diversion to Backfill Fisheries Section Budget Shortfall?

Discussions at oversight meetings last spring raised new concerns for the BOC: “In 2016 staff informed [Fisheries Oversight Committee] members that the Fisheries Section is considering using a large portion of the balance which it has allowed to build up in this dedicated account, not for the type of additional effort for which the stamp was created (new easement acquisitions, additional habitat improvement work, etc.), but to back fill a shortfall in the overall Fisheries Section budget. By failing to spend account funds on new easements, additional habitat work, special research, etc., the agency has created a bullseye on this dedicated account which it now appears poised to divert instead for activities which for decades have been paid for with general Game & Fish Fund dollars. We strongly urge the DNR not to break faith with trout anglers/stamp purchasers in this way.

The Fisheries Section indicated that it is somewhat unexpectedly faced with a budget shortfall, perhaps as much as large as \$1 million dollars. The long term health of the resource, the Fisheries Section budget and the Game & Fish Fund require increased revenue via raising general fishing license and other fees. However, obscuring the budget shortfall by forcing only the purchasers of trout stamps to sacrifice programs to cover the Section shortfall will alienate one of the few growing segments of the anglers, and weaken the public case for the needed revenue increase.



PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL TROUT STREAM FISHING EASEMENTS LIKE THIS ONE ALONG THE SUCKER RIVER NEAR DULUTH ARE A KEY USAGE OF OUR TROUT STAMP DOLLARS.

Staff indicated that the Fisheries Section plans to free up \$300,000 or more in general Game & Fish Fund dollars for non-trout related management by suddenly changing cost coding practices so that dedicated stamp funds are used to cover existing activities long paid for with general Game & Fish Fund dollars. This two-step funding shift has the net effect of depleting the dedicated trout and salmon account without providing any additional benefit to coldwater fisheries or trout stamp purchasers. The BOC finds this proposed approach to the use of dedicated funding to be unacceptable and strongly cautions against it.”

See the report listed above at pages 15-16.

It has been suggested that because the base level efforts of Fisheries staff happen to be the same type of activities as those extra efforts for which the trout stamp was created, somehow this reduction in trout management effort is alright. MNTU strongly disagrees. Stamp purchasers (and until now Fisheries managers) have always understood that stamp funds were additive and would not to be used in place of base fisheries funding. We do not know whether any such substitution has taken place, and hope that the DNR will clarify that it will not do so. Stay tuned.



A BEAUTIFULLY RESTORED REACH OF RUSH CREEK IN SE MINNESOTA. THIS SECTION OF RESTORATION WORK WAS COMPLETED BY A MN DNR FISHERIES CREW FROM LANESBORO, MN.

troubling signs that some Fisheries managers are prepared to use a two-step process to divert these dedicated funds for activities which until now have been paid for with general license revenues.

This threat of substitution of dedicated trout stamp funds was identified by the citizen oversight committee charged with annually reviewing DNR expenditures from the Game & Fish Fund. The Game and Fish Fund Budgetary Oversight Committee (“BOC”) consists of approximately 25 anglers and hunters who meet regularly from December to June. The BOC reviews dedicated

needed for cash flow purposes is only \$75,000, yet the balance has steadily grown from \$403,000 (FY 2011) to \$894,000 (FY 2015). During this same period, area fisheries managers were told that no money was available for purchasing trout stream easements, despite the fact that trout and salmon stamp funds are a traditional source for these acquisitions. The DNR has expended no trout stamp funds for trout stream easements over the past 4 fiscal years.

The BOC remains very concerned that the funds intended for trout stream easement acquisitions, among other uses,



A SECTION OF TROUT COVER INSTALLED ON RUSH CREEK IN SE MN BY THE DNR FISHERIES CREW FROM LANESBORO, MN

THE SECRETS OF A JERK FLY

By Gunnar Brammer



A SELECTION OF SUPER JERK FLIES IN DIFFERENT COLORS. NOTE THE LARGER REAR HOOK, CRUCIAL IN THE ACTION OF THE FLY IN THE WATER.

I crouched on the bank, staring at the coffee stained waters of the St. Louis as they flowed effortlessly around the protruding boulders. I could see the seam, where anxious speed collided with the calmed stillness of a deeper pool. In my previous adventure to this spot, a large northern stole from me my newest creation, the Super Jerk. With redemption on my mind, I stepped up to the plate, this time armed with 30 pounds of stainless steel between the fish and my fly. The Super Jerk smacked the water hard, just to the outside of the seam, heading for the safety of the deep hole in an attempt to escape the swift currents. The twitches from the end of the rod brought the fly hovering over the deep calm waters. Each twitch drove the fly left, than right, each time wobbling with uncertainty. Without hesitation, a white mouth came up from the deep and my fly disappeared before my eyes. The northern could not resist, and redemption was mine.

Weightless Jerk flies have a special place in my heart. The side to side glide action, subtle belly wobble, and indeterminate hover time make Jerk flies some of the most productive and dramatic patterns to fish. To some of you, Jerk flies may be a totally new topic, and to others they may be a regular visitor to your fly box. Regardless, this article is aimed at increasing your effectiveness at tying/designing Jerk bait style streamers by focusing on specific aspects of their design and their impacts on the fly's effectiveness. We will take an in depth look into the principles that govern a Jerk fly, including head shape, material viscosity, and an interesting perspective on hook selection.

1: Head Shape

There was a left to right action as the Super Jerk crossed over the seam and a subtle belly wobble scattering light into the darkness of the pool. This action is what I use to define a Jerk fly, an action often referred to as "walking the dog".

A critical aspect of a Jerk fly is the shape of its head. The head on all streamers is responsible for giving the fly its action, and the selection of the tailing materials accentuates it. Whether the head is designed to jig, push water, dive/float, or, in this case, jerk, it is the head that is responsible for the movement of the fly behind it.

The head of a Jerk fly is designed as a sail. Tall and thin, the head is able to catch lateral currents and deflect the fly left/right. To maximize this principle, a fly must be balanced with an appropriate front hook. In short, the hook must be of a thick enough wire and wide enough hook gap to keel the fly, as to keep the head in the vertical orientation. Without a balanced hook, the fly will roll as gravity draws the fly down and water displacement forces the fly to its side. The reason I say a "balanced" hook, is because I prefer hooks just heavy enough and large enough to keel the fly, while allowing the fly to wobble. This belly wobble helps to showcase the silhouette of the fly, color contrasts, and scatter additional light bringing attention to the fly and mimicking a sick or wounded bait-fish.

2: Material Viscosity

One of the current trends in streamer fishing are flies that push water. Jerk flies are designed to do just the opposite and instead of pushing, they are designed to

cut. The tall, narrow head and shoulders of a Jerk fly are maximized under two material conditions: low material viscosity, and/or low material density.

A good comparison is between the Super Jerk and the Hollow Point shown on page 15. The Super Jerk is built up from a multi layered synthetic dubbing brush paired with a stacked dubbing head. While the core of this brush and the viscosity of the dubbing have the potential to add tremendous water drag to the fly, this drag is compensated for by the low tie in density of each material. Both the brush and stacked dubbing head are paired in a way to maximize silhouette with the least amount of material possible, reducing unnecessary friction.

While the Super Jerk is built from viscous materials at low densities, the Hollow Point is just the opposite. Supported by a sparse bucktail wing, the head of a

Hollow Point is built up from a dense stack of reverse tied craft fur. This high density gives the fly the necessary silhouette without affecting the fly's action. This is due to the low material viscosity of the bucktail and craft fur.

Although the materials of the head are critical to the success of the fly, the tension on the rear hook also plays a large role in the success of a Jerk fly. Drag in the rear of an articulated fly is the fastest way to dull a fly's action. Although the addition of the rear hook will inevitably add friction to the design and begin to dampen the "Jerk" action, by picking slippery materials in combination with sparse wing materials we are often able to build the length and silhouette without too much compromise. Materials such as saddle hackles, bucktail, and craft fur are often staples in Jerk flies.



THE PROFILE OF A WELL TIED JERK FLY, READY TO HIT THE WATER

A good assumption is that straight fibered synthetics, as well as sparse natural materials such as marabou and hackle are fairly slippery in the water. While crinkled synthetics, not absorbing water but trapping it, and dense natural materials such as wool, arctic fox, Icelandic sheep and dubbings have significantly higher water drag.

3: Hook Selection

When you think of hook selection, you often consider the species you'll be chasing, and rightfully so. For trout, who often aggressively swipe at flies in a quick attempt to stun prey, thin wire hooks are often far more effective. Yet when designed for bass or pike, thick wire hooks are on the forefront. Although there are many additional aspects to consider, one that I feel is often left out is the mass of the hook.

When we discussed material viscosity we acknowledged that the head and tailing materials add friction to the fly, slowing it down. But something that is rarely thought about is the momentum that the mass of the hook provides the fly, mainly because flies are designed to slow down! The momentum of the hook is what is propelling the fly forward after all, and the materials are what end up slowing it down.

Typically water drag is added to intentionally slow the front hook, allow the rear to articulate around it. Likewise the push of water from a bulky head is design to "swim" the rear hook, which benefits from being a lighter wire. Yet Jerk flies weren't designed to push, but cut.

We briefly discussed the ideal candidate

for the front hook, a balance between wire thickness and gap size to provide a stable keel; this is likewise an ideal candidate for providing sufficient mass to propel a Jerk fly forward into its deflection. For larger patterns up to 6 inches, I prefer a thick wire 2/0 such as Ahrex Predator Stingers, or Gamakatsu B10s. Yet on patterns smaller than 6 inches, you can often get away with thinner wire hooks such as Partridge Attitude Streamer Hooks and Daiichi 2460's. Above the 6 inch mark, my favorite hooks have been Ahrex 4/0 Light Predator Stingers and Partridge Universal Predator X in 3/0.

Although the front hook is important to understand, the most exciting aspect of this momentum principle lies with the rear hook.

As we discussed previously, the addition of a rear hook with materials will inevitably add more friction to the fly. For 95% of your tying, the rear hook is likely 1 to 2 sizes smaller than the front hook, and is often made from a thinner wire. The idea being that a lighter rear hook will have more movement...and it does, when the rear hook is articulating with respect to the front hook. However, Jerk flies work in the opposite manner, with the front hook articulating away from the rear. By integrating a larger rear hook, we can overcome the added material friction, and as a result, utilize the momentum of the rear hook to drive the front hook onto its path of deflection.

This idea has been with me for a little over a year and a half now, and has proven itself over a full summer of abuse. For me, it originated with my Big Booty De-



THE HOLLOW POINT - A FLY DESIGNED BY CUSTOM TIER GUNNAR BRAMMER

ceiver, where I paired two Gamakatsu B10s's for both back and front hooks. While that pattern has evolved over the past year, the principle of paired hooks has stuck with me. Next time you tie a Jerk style fly, try matching the size of the back hook with the front hook, yet in a lighter class wire. This will insure you have sufficient momentum to overcome the additional water drag and will give new life to your Jerk flies!

Review

By increasing the size of your trailing hook, you are effectively able to add additional movement behind the head of the fly. By keeping the head and tail materials sparse and being aware of the viscosity/density ratios we can maximize the momentum from our hook mass, while achieving the desired silhouette. These factors combined with the tall and narrow head design will maximize your dog walking ability,

and bring your Jerk flies to life.

This intense Jerk action is one of my personal favorites for chasing any predator on the fly, from trout to musky. It is a must-have fly style in your streamer box.

Editors Note: Gunnar Brammer is the owner of Brammer's Custom Flies, 25 years old, and currently resides in Duluth, MN. When Gunnar was 22 he was blessed to have spent a summer working for Kelly Galloup in Montana, and that summer has forever impacted his fishing and tying. He is a passionate streamer fisherman and fly designer chasing smallmouth bass and northern pike in particular, but loves to fish for anything with an aggressive nature and bad intentions. He is currently a Flymen Fishing Co. Ambassador, Deer Creek Pro Team Member, Hedron Inc. fly tying Team Member and Karanzas Fly Co pro team member.

WOMEN'S FLY FISHING RETREAT

A Headwaters Chapter Introductory Experience - June 2nd & 3rd, 2017

By Val Wagner

Our goal is to provide a fun, informal and comprehensive hands-on experience that builds confidence and skill in fly fishing. Designed for beginners to learn basic skills and knowledge of equipment such as rods, tippets, clothing, fishing techniques, flies and on the water fishing. This workshop is all about you and your needs and will progress at your level to maximize your enjoyment and success in fly fishing.

My husband and I will draw on over 60 years of teaching experience to utilize best practice techniques in casting, catching fish, and tying your own flies. Simply put, we love fly fishing. We love its history, art and, most of all, catching the fish. Any fish on any water, from trout to pike, musky to sunfish... all on a fly!

We look forward to sharing this adventure with you. Fee: \$95, space is limited

Fee includes three meals, usage of equipment, nine hours of instruction including on the water fishing, and flies to take home to begin your adventure. Lodging is on your own and there are many options in Bemidji.

Retreat Schedule

Friday:
5:30-6:30pm, Social hour with wine & cheese at the Garden Grill and Pub.
6:30-7:00pm, House special pizza
7:00-9:00pm, Intro to fly fishing and equipment

Saturday:
9:30am-12:00pm, Waterfront casting instruction and practice, Lake Bemidji
12:00-1:00pm, Gourmet picnic lunch
1:00-2:00pm, Break
2:30-6:00pm, Fishing and casting, River House
6:00pm-7:00pm, Social hour and meal
7:00pm-9:00pm, Fishing, fly tying, or socializing, your choice.

Sponsored by:
Headwaters TU,
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For more info: call Riverwood Design 218-766-7757 or stop by Riverwood Design booth at the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo and pick up a brochure, March 17-19.



A HAPPY ANGLER FROM LAST YEAR'S WOMEN'S PROGRAM IN BEMIDJI

MNTU EDUCATION UPDATE

A Busy Season for Trout Unlimited Education Around Minnesota

By Benji Kohn

Well, this year sure has been a busy one! We started out the summer by receiving an equipment grant through the MNDNR to help us get more kids and families outside and fishing. We partnered with MinnAqua and TUNE Camp to provide fishing clinics over the summer and also hosted monthly outings on metro area lakes. Lots of fun was had catching panfish on both fly and spinning gear! We are always looking for volunteers to help out as mentors on these outings and camps, contact me if you would be interested.

In August, we started preparing for the upcoming school year with a teacher training held at the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization in Minneapolis, a great building to visit if you're ever in the area. We had 18 teachers attend the two-day workshop and they learned about trout, habitat, and water resources. They were also trained in Project WET, as well as the new equipment they will be using to raise the trout in their classroom. A special thanks goes out to the presenters from our partners at the DNR, U of MN, Hennepin County, MN Department of Education, and Forest Lake Pets who have helped give the teachers a great background on both lesson ideas and how to help the trout survive.

This fall was extremely busy with field days for our 17 schools plus helping out partner organizations with casting les-

sons, macro-invertebrate studies and fishing! Thanks to some wonderful volunteers and partners, we were able to reach over 2,500 students this fall. Some of the highlights were casting games, invasive species hunts with GPS, fish identification and, of course, learning about macro-invertebrates.

In the first week of November, we had three Trout in the Classroom (TIC) classrooms receive brown trout eggs, which will be stocked in their local watershed, Browns Creek near Stillwater, MN. The second week of December the remaining schools received rainbow trout eggs to raise in their aquariums. After the eggs arrived, I started make classroom visits to talk to the students about the trout lifecycle, what they will need in the wild to survive and how we try to recreate that in the classroom. The students are in charge of daily chores, water testing, feeding and cleaning. Starting soon I'll be back in the classroom to expand on our watershed knowledge and how it relates to groundwater. We can see how all this works through the use of a groundwater model courtesy of the MN DNR.

This winter we are starting to do some ice fishing! Thanks to the equipment grant we were able to purchase the tools needed to get more students and classes outside this winter. Just because the water is hard doesn't mean we have to stop fishing, right? Keep an eye on our Facebook page (MNTU's TIC Watershed Education Program).



FISHING AT THE LANESBORO POND WITH TUNE CAMP PARTICIPANTS.

We have partnered with Inver Hills Community College to hold our annual TIC Summit on March 17th, 2017. This event will gather 600 TIC students from all the schools together to learn more about watersheds, water resource issues and careers in the outdoor/recreation fields.

We look forward to May when we will start releasing the trout fingerlings into Browns Creek and the Vermillion River. This is a very fun and exciting day for the students as it's the culmination of all

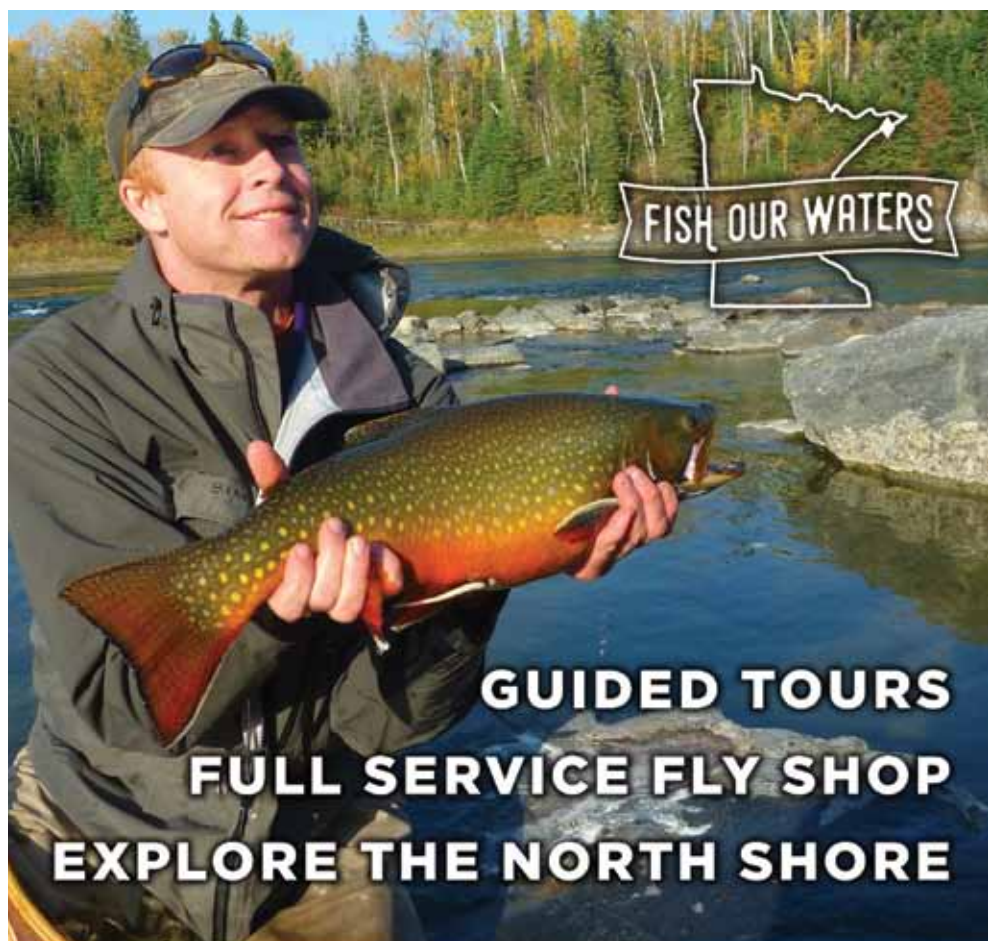
their hard work, caring for and learning about trout. While dates aren't set quite yet, I'll be looking for volunteers to help with casting games, a GPS hunt and several other activities.

I would like to thank everyone for all the help in making 2016 a successful year!

Editors Note: We need more education volunteers! If you'd like more information or to get involved, please reach out to Benji Kohn on Facebook @MNTU's TIC Watershed Education Project or via email at: ticminn@gmail.com



16 THESE TWO GIRLS CAUGHT OVER 40 PANFISH ON THE FLY AT KELLER LAKE!



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FLY TYING

With Laughing Trout Fly Fishing

By Paul Johnson



The Beadhead Scud is one of my favorite fly patterns, with the main reason being that the fly always seems to catch fish.

The fly can be tied in several different sizes. My personal favorite is to tie it on a size 14 hook, with a tungsten bead. The tungsten really helps to get the fly to the bottom. I tie most of them with a mixture of tan U/V Ice Dubbing and nature Hare's Mask

Dubbing. I mix them together in my wife's electric coffee grinder. I also like how the red wire contrasts nicely with the fly. Tie some up and give them a try!

If you should ever have any questions regarding fly tying, please feel free to contact me. My phone is 952-334-4688 or email at Paulwaconia@gmail.com.

Tight Lines!

The Beadhead Scud



Materials List

- Hook Scud Hook, size 12 to 18
- Thread Uni 6/0 or 8/0 Tan
- Bead Gold tungsten or brass, sized to match hook
- Shell Back Latex scud back
- Abdomen Sow/scud dubbing
- Ribbing Red wire, size brassie



Step 1. Insert bead on your hook and place your hook in your vise.



Step 2. Start your tying thread behind the bead and lay a thread base down the bend of the hook.



Step 3. Tie in a length of wire at the back of the hook.



Step 4. (Optional) Tie in a length of Scud Backing at the back of the hook.



Step 5. Form a dubbing loop with your tying thread.



Step 6. Apply a small amount of dubbing wax and touch dub the loop with dubbing.



Step 7. With your dubbing tool, twist the dubbing into a tight noodle.



Step 8. Wrap your dubbing loop around the hook to form a football shape body. Secure the loop with your tying thread and clip the excess dubbing.



Step 9. Pull the Scud Back forward on top of the fly. Secure with thread behind the bead and trim. It is a good idea to put a half hitch knot behind the bead.



Step 10. Counter wrap the wire forward with evenly spaced wraps to rib the fly. Secure with your tying thread and clip the excess. Whip finish.



Step 11. With your bodkin, pick out some of the dubbing on the bottom of the fly to form legs. Go fish!

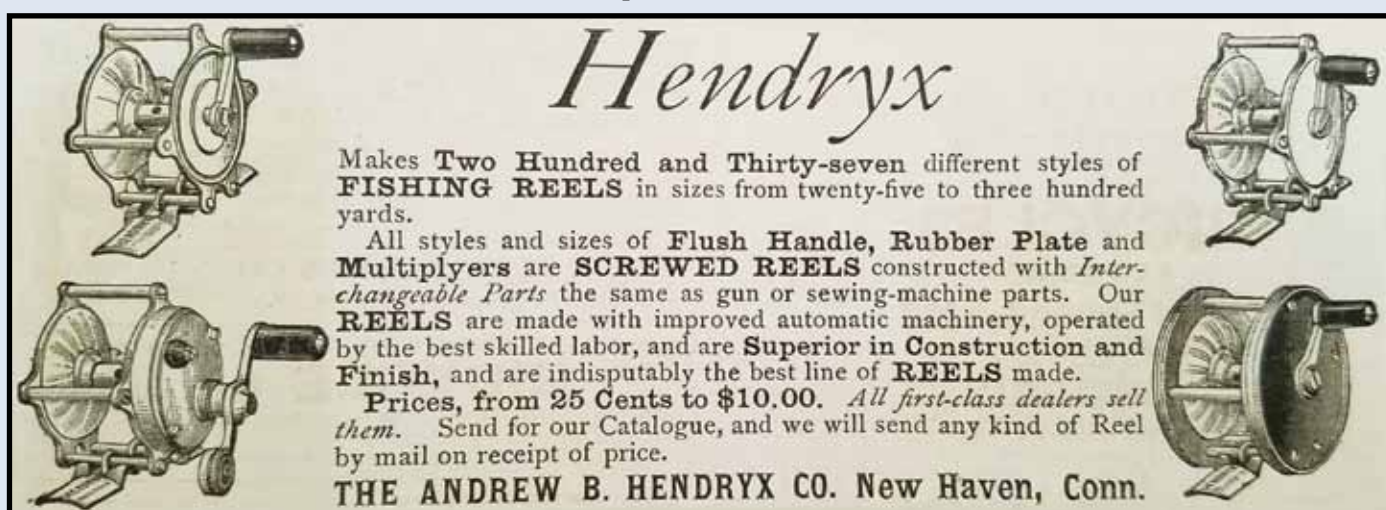
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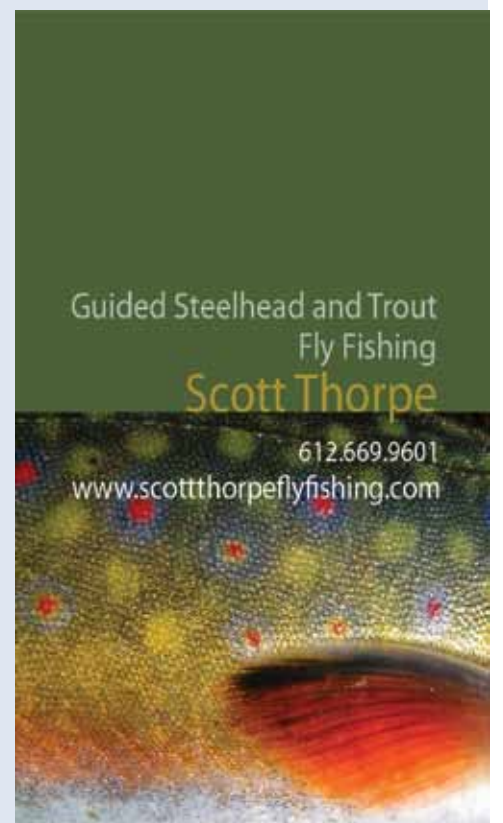
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BROWN TROUT IN SE MINNESOTA

History and Impacts of a Popular Minnesota Salmonid

By Neal D. Mundahl, Ph.D.

For many Minnesota trout anglers, the brown trout was probably the first trout that they caught and is probably still the species they most prefer. The brown trout has a broad geographic distribution in Minnesota. It is found in a variety of streams, rivers, and lakes across approximately two-thirds of the state, providing a diversity of fishing opportunities. Although it is not native to Minnesota, its current distribution far exceeds that of the state's native brook trout. Among non-native fishes, only the common carp has a wider distribution (but a much poorer reputation) in Minnesota than the brown trout.

The brown trout has a long and proud history in Minnesota, especially in the southeastern region of the state (SE MN). It is fairly safe to say that no one alive today can remember SE MN without brown trout swimming in its streams. However, old-timers might be able to recall years not too long ago when hooking into a brown trout was much harder, and the fish were often much smaller than they are today. A brief review may help to better understand the brown trout's somewhat complicated history in SE MN.

As European settlers immigrated into SE MN between 1850 and 1880, their poor agricultural practices and deforestation produced severe soil erosion in the bluffs and increased flooding, resulting in major stream habitat degradation. Coupled with overfishing of native brook trout during those times, recreational fisheries declined or collapsed throughout the region as sediments filled in stream pools and smothered brook trout spawning areas. Stream stocking with hatchery-reared brook trout began in 1878 to compensate for the lack of natural reproduction, but it had little effect.

Brown trout were first brought to North America from Germany in 1883 by the U.S. Fish Commission and stocked the following year into a Michigan river. Additional stock from Loch Leven, Scotland, arrived in the U.S. in 1884. Brown trout were considered superior to the native brook trout in three ways: 1. they were more tolerant of the warmer water temperatures that often developed as streams become degraded, 2. they were less likely to be over-fished because they were harder to catch, and 3. they grew to larger sizes, even in small streams. By 1890, brown trout were swimming in 38 states and two Canadian provinces.

By 1888, widespread stocking of both brown and rainbow trout had occurred in SE MN streams. Streams initially received brown trout with a German lineage, but Scottish browns are believed to eventually have made their way into Minnesota streams, probably via a Montana hatchery. The two lineages were originally considered genetically distinct based on long-term, oceanic separation of stocks between Scotland in the British Isles and the remainder of the European continent.



BROWN TROUT AND BROOK TROUT IN A NET FROM A SE MINNESOTA STREAM. NOTE THAT THE TOP TROUT IS A BROWN TROUT, WITH DARK SPOTS ON A LIGHT BACKGROUND. THE THIRD TROUT DOWN IS ALSO A BROWN. THE BROOK TROUT HAVE LIGHT SPOTS ON A DARK BACKGROUND AS WELL AS MORE PRONOUNCED PARR MARKINGS, OR VERTICAL BARS.

The brown trout's native range included Europe, northern Africa, and western Asia. Isolated populations existed as far west as Iceland. Within that range, brown trout existed as three "morphs" based on habitat and behavior: riverine fish that lived and spawned in rivers and streams, lacustrine fish that lived in lakes and migrated into rivers and streams for spawning, and anadromous fish that lived most of their lives in the ocean, returning to spawn in freshwater rivers like salmon. It is believed that all three morphs found their way into U.S. hatcheries, where they were mixed genetically to produce what has become known as the American generic brown trout.

The stocked brown trout survived in the streams of SE MN, despite the reduced discharges of cold water from underground springs that were a consequence of poor land use. Populations of brown trout in most streams were very low, sustained almost entirely by regular stocking of hatchery fish. This situation continued through the 1940s.

From the 1930s through the 1970s, the landscape of SE MN changed. A conservation ethic took hold, controlling sources of soil erosion on agricultural and forestry lands and starting the slow healing process in the region's streams. Ever so gradually, habitat conditions improved on their own in many streams and some brown trout populations became self-sustaining via natural reproduction.

As brown trout numbers climbed, management efforts gradually shifted from stocking to stream improvement. In the late 1940s, the Minnesota Department of Conservation began a program to reha-

bilitate trout stream habitats in SE MN. An "official" stream habitat improvement program began out of Lanesboro in 1957, leading to the creation of the MN DNR Lanesboro Area Fisheries Office in 1969.

In slightly over 50 years, more than 150 habitat improvement projects covering over 120 miles of stream were completed. In addition to the MN DNR, improvement projects have involved Trout Unlimited chapters, private contractors, and a host of local volunteers. All improvement projects are open to public angling, either on public land or on fishing easements purchased by the state from willing private landowners. Dollars for easements and habitat improvement have come from a variety of sources, but recently approximately \$7 million in trout stream rehabilitation has been funded by monies resulting from Minnesota's Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment.

Widespread stocking was still necessary throughout the 1970s to maintain brown trout fisheries within SE MN, but the need for stocking declined in the 1980s as natural reproduction became more successful. Today, there are 181 trout streams extending for more than 700 miles in SE MN, and the region has experienced over 30 years of increasing brown trout abundances. The majority of these streams now contain populations of wild brown trout, spawned naturally each fall between late October and early December. Just this past fall, Winona State University Biology students counted 162 brown trout nests, or redds, along a 3-mile stretch of Garvin Brook in Winona County.

As brown trout became more abundant, researchers from the MN DNR and the U of MN undertook a variety of studies to better understand the habitat needs, growth rates, food requirements, and population dynamics of this species in SE MN. For example, we have learned what types of habitats are needed for successful spawning, for good survival of juvenile fish, and for protection of large fish from summer predators and winter hazards. We now know that differing water chemistries, variability in water temperatures, and seasonal changes in food resources all interact to affect brown trout growth rates in different streams. Spring, summer, and fall floods have helped us to understand and even predict the impacts of future high-water events on both the abundance and growth rates of the youngest age groups of brown trout. Taken collectively, the results of these studies have helped to better focus management efforts within the region, including habitat restoration, supplemental stocking, angling seasons and regulations, responses to changing climates, and more.

Brown and brook trout coexist in many of SE MN's streams. Although both species can live together in the same stream reach, the larger, more aggressive brown trout often outcompetes the smaller brook trout for both food and habitat. The two species also may interbreed, resulting in the production of so-called "tiger trout" hybrids. In many systems in SE MN, brook trout are common only in the stream headwaters, with brown trout more abundant in lower reaches. Headwaters or small, isolated tributaries may be the best strongholds of brook trout in

some areas, where cold summer water temperatures may prevent further invasion by brown trout.

Studies in MN have highlighted the dominance of brown trout over brook trout. For example, U of MN scientists documented a slow replacement of brooks by browns over several years in a Metro-area stream, Valley Creek. We have observed a similar trend of replacement in a small tributary of Pleasant Valley Creek in SE MN. MN DNR scientists reported that brook trout abundance and growth improved and their population size structure shifted to larger individuals when brown trout were removed from a section of Coolridge Creek, suggesting that brooks were being outcompeted by browns under normal conditions.

The success of brown trout in the streams of SE MN has been attributed to improved land conservation practices, improved spring flows, and stream habitat rehabilitation. These same factors also have led to an increase in the distribution and abundance of brook trout in the region's streams, providing the MN DNR with another management option. During the past decade or two, an interesting question has popped up in trout management discussions: Could brown trout be permanently removed from one or more streams, allowing brook trout to flourish without competition?

The answer to this question might seem simple and straightforward, but reality reveals a more complex situation. Attempts to install a brown trout barrier in Coolridge Creek and remove brown trout above it were not completely successful, as browns seemed to find ways around the barrier during high-water

events. Such removals also are labor intensive, likely requiring more hours than can be allocated to a single project on a regular, recurring basis. The same idea has shown up in agency reports as recommendations for other streams or stream reaches (e.g., Gilmore Creek, Garvin Brook near Farmers Park), but always with the need for some type of brown trout barrier and/or major expenditures of labor to remove browns.

Additional concerns also are important in the brown versus brook discussion. Brown trout are much warier than brook trout and provide a greater angling challenge. This was the reason why brooks were easily overfished and why browns were stocked and survived in the late 1800s. Brown trout also grow to a larger size than brook trout, and the opportunity to catch large brown trout in the small streams of SE MN is what prompts many anglers to keep returning to fish these waters.

There is also the “native” versus “non-native” idea to consider. Recent (2015) findings by the MN DNR and U of MN indicate that brook trout are present in 68% of the region's trout streams. Nearly one-third of the populations examined during their studies were genetically unique only to SE MN streams, implying that they were descendants, or remnants, of brook trout originally native to the area. These fish have been called heritage brook trout by the MN DNR, and it has been suggested that these unique populations should be given “conservation priority.” Will this discovery change the management focus in SE MN from brown trout to brook trout?

Even if brook trout do receive more management attention in future years,



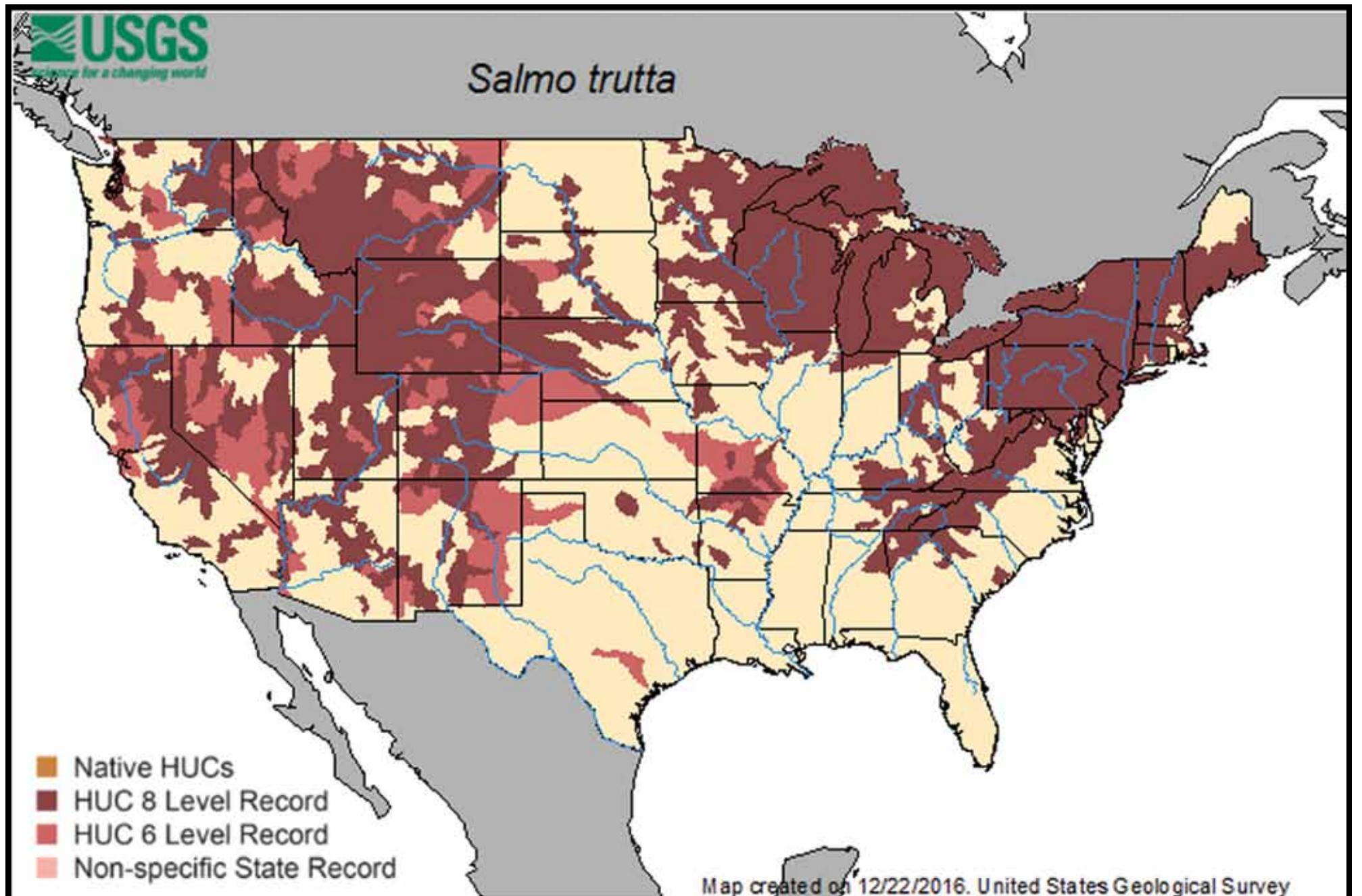
A LARGE SE MINNESOTA BROWN TROUT. SOME OF THE LARGEST SPECIMENS IN THE REGION CAN REACH OVER 10 POUNDS AND 30 INCHES

which is almost a certainty, it seems very likely that brown trout will remain as the most important game fish in the streams of SE MN for quite some time. U of MN and Trout Unlimited studies have highlighted just how important angling for brown trout has been to the region. The numbers are staggering.

Anglers spend over a half-million angler-days fishing for trout in SE MN each year, leaving behind a cool \$48 million in spending. That breaks down to over \$200/trip and more than \$4,800/year by area residents, and over \$400/trip and more than \$3,700/year for non-residents. Looked at another way, each dollar spent on stream rehabilitation returns \$24.50 to the regional economy every year for the life of the project. These figures make it easy to see that fishing for brown trout is

a major economic driver for the SE MN region. When expanded out to the entire Driftless Area of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois, it's not surprising that trout anglers and all things related to their fishing activities add up to over \$1 billion in spending each year.

Brown trout are a highly prized and valuable part of the recreational fisheries in Minnesota, especially in the southeastern region of the state. The brown trout fishery is so good that it attracts anglers from all over the United States and beyond, and its economic impact is very significant. We can be extremely proud of the efforts undertaken by researchers and managers that have resulted in this fantastic resource for our state. Thank you!



RECORDS OF BROWN TROUT, SALMO TRUTTA, IN FEDERALLY DEFINED HYDROLOGIC UNIT CODE OR “HUC” WATERSHEDS IN THE CONTINENTAL U.S. NOTE THAT BROWN TROUT ARE NOT NATIVE TO NORTH AMERICA, WHICH IS DETAILED IN THE ARTICLE. THIS MAP IS NOT MEANT TO SHOW WHERE THEY ARE CURRENTLY FOUND, BUT WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN RECORDED IN THESE WATERSHEDS.

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INCLUDING MNTU IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING

Any loss in a family is challenging. It's much easier to delay answering uncomfortable questions such as "What happens to my assets and my loved ones when I or my partner dies?" So it's no surprise that roughly half of Americans don't have a will, and even fewer have an estate plan. While it is a hard subject to discuss, an estate plan goes much further than a will. Not only does it deal with the distribution of assets and legacy wishes, but it may help you and your heirs pay substantially less in taxes, fees, and court costs, as well as benefit the people and causes that you care about.

Including MNTU in your estate plans not only helps to provide for future programmatic and organizational security, it can take many different forms to balance your financial and philanthropic goals. Drafting these documents may seem like a daunting task at first, until you realize all the good that comes from having them. A gift in your will or living trust lets you make a meaningful gift to MNTU with ease and be flexible in your commitment. You can give cash, specific property

or a percentage of your estate, with restrictions or without. Because your gift doesn't come to MNTU until after your lifetime, you can change your mind at any time. To make sure your will accomplishes your goals according to your wishes, we recommend that you obtain the professional counsel of an attorney who specializes in estate planning. We've included specific bequest language below for usage with individual or estate planning.

Bequest Language

The official bequest language for Minnesota Trout Unlimited is:

Unrestricted General Legacy:

"I give Minnesota Trout Unlimited, a Minnesota non-profit corporation, presently at 7201 West 78th Street, Suite 207 Bloomington, MN 55439, the sum of (dollar amount)/ or percentage of (___%)/ residue of my estate to be used at the discretion of its governing board."

Specific:

"I give Minnesota Trout Unlimited, a Minnesota non-profit corporation, pres-

ently at 7201 West 78th Street, Suite 207 Bloomington, MN 55439, my (specific personal property item(s) and/or real property located at _____) to be used at the discretion of its governing board."

Gift of Residuary Estate:

"All the rest, residue and remainder of my estate, both real and personal, and wherever situated, I give, devise and bequeath to Minnesota Trout Unlimited, a Minnesota non-profit corporation, pres-

ently at 7201 West 78th Street, Suite 207 Bloomington, MN 55439 to be used at the discretion of its governing board."

The information above is not intended as legal or tax advice. For such advice, please consult an attorney or tax advisor. Contact our executive director John Lenczewski with any questions or for assistance with estate planning, using this language or this process: jlenczewski@comcast.net or at 612-670-1629



TROLLING THE WEB

By Dan Callahan

Periodically, I troll around the internet looking for some interesting Minnesota trout fishing video channels.

One you should really check out is one of our own, the Twin Cities Trout Unlimited (TCTU) YouTube channel! There you can see:

- The biggest trout we've found during electrofishing surveys with the MNDNR on the Vermillion River and Eagle Creek
- Happy Vermillion Riverkeepers ripping through the buckthorn jungle as we restore the South Branch of the Vermillion River
- People learning how to fly cast at our

free clinic on Hay Creek

- The students from our Trout in the Classroom programs at the first State-wide Summit in St. Paul, sharing what they learned about watersheds and about raising trout from eggs in their classrooms

- That snowy trout fishing opener when we took the MNDNR commissioner fishing on Hay Creek, and laid the groundwork to save Minnesota trout streams from the dangers of silica sand mining

- Three ways to tie a double nymph rig or tandem rig

The easiest way to find it is to search Google for: Twin Cities Trout Unlimited (TCTU) YouTube.



CHECK OUT THE VIDEOS FEATURING TROUT LIKE THIS EAGLE CREEK BROWN TROUT ON THE TWIN CITIES TU YOUTUBE CHANNEL

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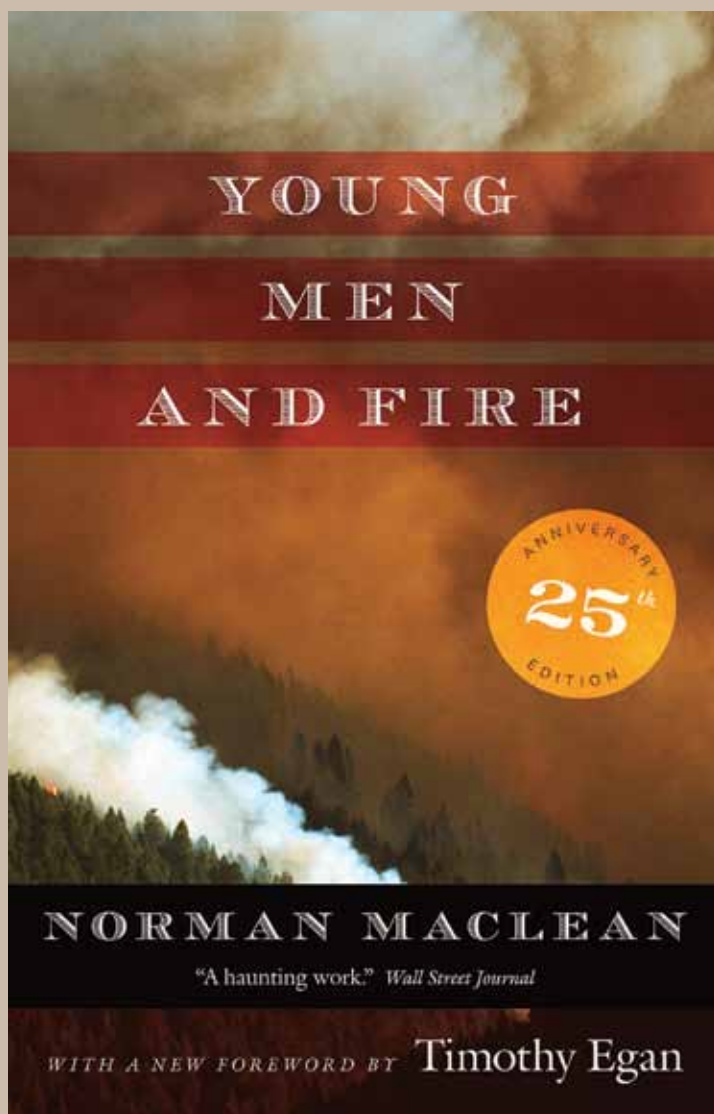
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YOUNG MEN AND FIRE

Book Review

By John Hunt



Author Norman Maclean holds a special place in the hearts of many trout anglers. For some, he was a gifted storyteller who shared an intimate account of growing up in the family of a Presbyterian minister in Missoula, Montana in the early years of the 20th century. For others, he is the author whose 1976 semi-autobiographical novella led to the movie that changed Montana fly fishing forever. To me, Maclean was a fascinatingly complex person, whose career was much more than just *A River Runs Through It* and *Other Stories*, however influential that chronicle was for an entire generation (not to mention Brad Pitt's acting career). One of my favorite Maclean titles is *Young Men and Fire*.

Published posthumously in 1992 (Maclean died in 1990), the book examines the August 1949 Mann Gulch fire that killed 13 U.S. Forest Service firefighters in the span of minutes. Maclean's quest to tell the story, I believe, stemmed from his own experience working for the USFS before attending college, as well as his innate sense of justice for the smokejumping crew that perished together in a piece of remote wilderness near Helena, Montana.

Professional foresters and fire behavioral scientists had debated the evidence concerning the Mann Gulch fire for years, attempting to determine the cause for the tragedy that claimed the lives of so many young men. In doing so, they tacitly implied that the crew shared some blame in their own demise. Maclean felt strongly that the legacies of these men, some of whom were WWII veterans and

others barely out of their teens, deserved the truth. The book methodically captures the author's own research into the fire, including his conversations with USFS employees, review of official government documents, and interviews with survivors and families of the victims. The book even includes Maclean's detailed account of visits he made to Mann Gulch in 1978 and 1979, which remains a challenging place for seasoned hikers, let alone a college professor five years into retirement. His personality and background opened doors that had been closed for decades, allowing for an exhaustive, independent examination of the fire. One of the most compelling elements of the narrative for me was the recounting of the discovery by rescuers that the crew's wrist watches had been seared motionless by the inferno that they could not outrun, forever capturing the end of their tragic race.

As Norman Maclean concluded at the end of *Young Men and Fire*, "I, an old man, have written this fire report. Among other things, it was important to me, as an exercise for old age, to enlarge my knowledge and spirit so I could accompany young men whose lives I might have lived on their way to death." The Mann Gulch fire, both then and now, serves to remind all of us how the forces of nature are ultimately unpredictable and uncontrollable.

If you are interested, Mann Gulch is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and can be accessed via an enjoyable, narrated tour boat ride. A person so inclined can arrive on one tour boat, disembark to spend the day hiking the Gulch, and return to the marina on a later boat.

MNTU CHAPTER CHANGES

By Carl Haensel

Northern Minnesota is a land of vibrant forests, rushing waters and over 1300 miles of trout streams. What northern Minnesota does not have in abundance is people. Our Trout Unlimited Chapters in the northern tier of the state have decided to decrease in number by one, and the Minnesota State Council has voted to decharter the Waybinahbe Chapter of Trout Unlimited. We have two vibrant and active chapters in Northern MN, the Headwaters Chapter, based in Bemidji, and the Gitche Gumee chapter, based in Duluth. Both will now cover a wider geographic area, encompassing the former Waybinahbe area.

We wish to invite all TU members in Northern Minnesota to come to any of the many events, meetings, and programs that provide opportunities to get involved with TU. Throughout the season in 2017, there will be a wide variety of offerings. From habitat and reasearch based volunteer opportunities to social events with flytying and even some beer, there will be quite a few different options available. Check out listings and information in the "Chapter News" section beginning on page 26. Contact our local chapter

presidents with any thoughts or questions, and we hope that you can make it to local events this year.

I'd also like to take the time to thank those who have worked on behalf of Trout Unlimited in the Grand Rapids, MN area where Waybinahbe has been based, and Rod Prusi, recent chapter president in particular. It is challenging to run a small chapter, and takes a lot of effort. Thanks, Rod, for all the time that you've put in over the past few years.

Additionally, the Waybinahbe Chapter was served for many years by the stalwart Wayne Hoshal, who passed away in 2014. Wayne had been a founder of the chapter, a former chapter president and secretary, and a tireless advocate for trout in the area. He served the chapter until his passing at the age of 86, and has been missed by many within the TU community.

We hope this change in structure may bring new opportunities to the area, and look forward to hearing from members. Look for Gitche Gumee and Headwaters Chapter contact information inside the front cover to get in touch and for more information.

THE CREEL

By Larry Gavin

Another emptiness that needs to be filled.
So down into that darkness
I place ferns, they rest like
The voice of Adam after naming
The animals.
Through the wicker some light
Shines, and the last breath
Of daylight fills it too.
As the stars rise, they appear
Like trout, their speckles
On a blue backdrop. Small brook
Trout from unnamed waters
Down along the border somewhere.
I fill the darkness with a tiny fire
And cook them slowly, in a circle
Of light.
They become me, and I gently
Place the creel back in its place
Waiting for another day
Another path to the same
Conclusion, sleep, heartbeats,
The song of creatures making their way
In the darkness that stretches
Until morning.

Larry Gavin is the author of four books of poems: *Necessities*, *Least Resistance*, *Stone and Sky*, and *The Initiation of Praise*. 2017 will see the publication of his fifth book, *A Fragile Shelter: New and Selected Poems*, from Red Dragonfly Press. His articles and essays have appeared widely, and he's an avid fly fisher.

FOSTER THE OUTDOORS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

By Tim Hemstad

Consider for a moment that you could single handedly impact the sport of fly fishing and conservation of the environment beyond your own generation. I believe the future of the sport we know and love rests in the hands of kids that have yet to discover the intricacies of how to approach a stream, how to present a fly to a fish or even how to tie a hook to a line.

Who Taught You How to Fish?

Born and raised in Bemidji, MN, I can still remember catching sunnies off the dock on Kabekona Beach near my grandparents' home in Walker. Time stood still when Uncle Mick took the kids out on the boat to go fishing. Decades later, I still remember the hours of anticipation sitting and waiting for a twitch on the line, followed by the jarring boat ride back to the landing over white capped waves. Catching and eating fresh perch and walleye was the name of the game, come rain or shine.

During the spring of 2016 I donated a weekend of my time to the Beginners Fly Fishing Weekend sponsored by the DNR's MinnAqua program. The experience inspired me, and perhaps impacted me as much as it did the 15-year-old that arrived on a damp Friday evening wondering why her mom dragged her down to southern Minnesota to hang around with a bunch of dry-humored old men. After getting over the butterflies of meeting a few new people, the teen slowly warmed up to the idea that this might be fun. Saturday morning after a few demos and some grassy field casting practice, we headed for the stream. I'll never forget the look on her face when she hooked, played and I netted her very first Minnesota brown on an elk hair caddis pattern I gave her. In that moment she and her mom both recognized that fly fishing isn't just for old men.

Declining Interest in the Outdoors

Studies show that the average American boy or girl now spends as little as five to 30 minutes a day outdoors. The extent of the social, psychological and environmental impact of "screen time" in lieu of good old fashioned playing outside is still an unanswered question. The undeniable truth is without people interested in the outdoors, the list of stewards for the outdoors will dwindle.

Both participation and funding will deteriorate, which would impact everything from bugs to fish, birds, mammals, water quality, and public lands across the country.

Scott D. Sampson, paleontologist and author of the book "How to Raise a Wild Child," says fostering a love of the outdoors in children begins with three primary building blocks.

1)Experience-A connection with nature is forged through engaging the senses

of touch, sight, sound, smell as well as taste when the opportunity presents itself. The sweet taste of honeysuckle as you forge your way towards the sound of the stream; the smell of fresh cut hay in an adjacent field; watching a deer cross as you stand unnoticed in the middle of the stream; the chattering of a kingfisher as it swoops and perches a branch downstream of you; gripping the cork of a fly rod with fish-slimed hands. As these scenes play out, passion is forged.

2)Mentoring-The role of a mentor is not necessarily an expert passing down information. Especially with young children, it is far more effective to engage in side-by-side exploration. Accomplished mentors listen more than they talk. Instead of simply telling someone how to do something, they model key behaviors and observe the mentee while offering up pointers here and there.

3)Understanding-Introduce big ideas first, with little emphasis on detailed facts. For example, demonstrate that stream current dictates which way the fish are looking because that is where their food is coming from. After this big idea is understood and approaching the stream becomes consistent, start elaborating on the types of food rolling downstream.

Foster the Outdoors Mentorship Program - 2017

Trout Unlimited's mission is to conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. For our mission to succeed beyond our current generation, we must reach out now to children and youth to teach them to fish, to teach them about conservation, and to encourage them to become future leaders in our organization. Today's children and youth are the ones who must take over from us in caring deeply for the fish that we love and the places where they live.

The Foster the Outdoors Mentorship Program is intended to be a simple person-to-person network, directly connecting youth to mentors. The "schedule" is deliberately hands off, naturally allowing mentors and mentees to arrange their own location, dates and times throughout the fishing season. I like to compare it to tagging along with an aunt or uncle who is into fly fishing for a child who doesn't already have one.

Safety of the participants is vitally important to the success of this program. A guardian will be required to participate in all planned outings. Developing a passion for something is part of a social process that involves multiple experiences over time with friends and family. For this reason, engaging a parent or other adult family member in addition to the youth is imperative. Because becoming an angler doesn't happen overnight, repeat outings are strongly encouraged. The goal of the program is for the family to embrace the outdoors and continue to explore fly fishing beyond the mentorship experience.



JOIN US IN HELPING ENGAGE, EDUCATE AND MENTOR THE NEXT GENERATION!

To kick this off, we need to hear from stewards like you willing to donate a little bit of time on the water. You do not need to be a TU member to qualify as a mentor. We also need leaders within local chapters to administer pairing up local youth with mentors. For the inaugural year of 2017 we're setting a goal for each of the six MNTU chapters to arrange mentorship with at least five children. This means engaging with 30 Minnesota youth statewide, as well as 30 parents or other adult family members. With your help we can raise the bar for 2018 and possibly inspire TU chapters nationwide.

We will provide introduction packets to include mentor applications, background check authorizations, waiver forms for youth/guardian's, as well as DNR stream map books and beginner fly fishing basics pamphlets. All six MNTU chapters also have fly rod-reel combos available for mentees and guardians to use as needed.

Everything from rivers, creeks, lakes or backwater ponds are all welcome to this format as long as mentees are exposed to the outdoors with an emphasis on the basics of fly fishing. A little patience, passion and a very small bit of know-how is all it takes. Give a little time and I promise you will take away more than you bring to the table, when paired up with the enthusiasm of a child.

Please contact me with any interest or feedback about this program. If volunteering isn't your style, but you have flies, leaders, rods, reels or other gear to donate, please contact me. We will

make sure they end up in the hands of a future TU member.

With a little bit of work, we're going to have a lot of fun with this program. Tight Lines!

Please call, text or email:
Tim Hemstad
612-247-1536
fostertheoutdoors@hotmail.com

Join a Conversation on Mentoring at the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo!

Experienced anglers play a critical role in mentoring beginner fly fishers! How can organizations meet the growing demand for mentors to provide hands-on, personalized instruction and encouragement? Join us to discuss opportunities, challenges, and ideas for fostering a strong, diverse mentor pool in Minnesota!

This session will be facilitated by representatives from Fly Fishing Women of Minnesota, Trout Unlimited, International Federation of Fly Fishers, and DNR MinnAqua. Participants will receive examples of fly fishing education resources.

Friday, March 17th 4-5 PM
Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo
Walker Fieldhouse,
Hamline University, St Paul, MN

Questions: Contact Deb Groebner from the MN DNR, 507-359-6049

THE OTHER TROUT

Piscatorial Pursuits in Northern Minnesota

By Bob Wagner



Stop now and don't read this if you're a trout fishing purist! The fish that I write about regularly captures my attention and, as it turns out, this is true for a significant percentage of fly anglers. It's long and sleek, attacks flies aggressively, prefers cool water, often jumps when hooked, and can grow a foot in its first year of life. This fish is distributed world-wide, hits surface lures, eats mice and 16" inch rough fish, is delicious to eat and grows to over 40" and 20 pounds. Your last clue: Many walleye fishermen hate them, don't even want to touch them, and if they're hooked they will often cut their line. I'm fine with this hatred, since it leaves more fish for you and I to chase with the fly rod. The fish in question: the northern pike.

Having spent over 60 years fishing for pike (mostly with spin casting equipment), I never thought the last years would be filled with more fun and excitement than the previous ten year period. There are several reasons for this, all of which are related to joining Trout Unlimited 17 years ago. Consequently, I also started fly fishing 17 years ago. I now know they go together like bread and butter or big flies and weighted lines.

Fly fishing and Trout Unlimited both continue to surprise and enrich my life, and *Esox lucius*, the water wolf, definitely falls into this category. This enrichment always happens through learning about new techniques, equipment and skills such as new tying patterns. Meeting new fly anglers through TU that are passionate about chasing different species (like pike) has also been instrumental in keeping this sport new and exciting.

I enjoy chasing whatever fish will eat a fly, especially steelhead and trout, but much of my time is spent chasing *Esox*. This past fall, six of us had the most amazing pike fishing of our lives. To me, large numbers of large pike is

the epitome of "amazing." To learn more about how to be more successful catching pike visit the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo and attend my Friday pike presentation March 17th. We'll discuss the secrets of finding, hooking and landing big pike on a fly, as well as the development of successful pike flies to tie and use around the Midwest.

December third was the last day of pike fishing this past season for myself and a close fishing friend who brought his daughter. She caught her first pike, a 26" fish, on a fly rod! A 28" pike was the biggest fish of the day. Even with ice forming on the guides of our fly rods, we had a fun afternoon. A few days after this last trip my friend sent me a picture of the boat landing and everything was frozen over and covered in snow, all of which inspired the following poem.

Oh Great Pike Beneath the Ice

Oh great pike it's time to rest.

While friends tie with hackle, flash
And bucktail, strong to meet the test.

You shall rise again cherished *Esox*

With scale of silver, green and gold.

Even now with home frozen over

True water wolf, you swim so bold.

On a warm spring wind, ice will fade.

Exciting day, exciting day.

We shall dance again great pike

With a fly if you wish

Come this month of May.

2017 MNTU PHOTO CONTEST

This is the official announcement of the 4th season of the MNTU photo contest. Send in your entries early and prepare to use your new flies this season!

the location the photo was taken in the submission.

- Submission of photos gives MNTU the right to publish photos in the MNTU newsletter and in online media.

Rules of the Contest:

- Photos must be shot in Minnesota
- Photos should fall into a category:
 - Minnesota Waters
 - Trout, Salmon & Steelhead
 - Family Fishing
- Photos must include a trout, salmon or steelhead, **OR** a water body that they inhabit.
- Photos must be submitted by May 15th, 2017. Top entries in each category will be published in the June issue of the MNTU Newsletter.
- All photos submitted must be sent in *.jpg format at their original resolution to the Editor at: mntueditor@gmail.com
- There is a entry limit of three photos per individual. Please include the name of the photographer and

NEW 2017 Prizes!

The winner in each category will receive a box of a dozen flies ready to catch trout this season. The overall winner will receive an official Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo T-shirt with the 2017 design by Jake Keeler, and an official Expo hat in either brown or gray.

Share this announcement with your friends near and wide, we welcome submissions from MNTU members and non-members alike. Photos from the contest will be used in the upcoming June 2017 issue of *Trout Unlimited Minnesota* and will be highlighted on the MNTU web site and Facebook page and in promotion for next season's Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo.

Questions? Contact the newsletter editor at: mntueditor@gmail.com.

WHAT'S NEW IN 2017 FOR TUNE CAMP

TUNE Camp is a conservation ecology camp based on the teachings of conservationist Aldo Leopold. It is open to boys and girls ages 11 to 16 and held at the Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center in Lanesboro MN. If you've not been to TUNE Camp for a few years, it's grown and is now even bigger and better! This year it will take place June 21st thru the 25th. Yes, it's now a 5 day camp! With all the same goals and focus on conservation and ecology, all the same programs as last year and newly added programs of Forestry, Soil Biology, and Aquatic Invasive Species.

Our volunteer staff consists of members from many different conservation groups who share the common interest to better educate students toward achieving our goal. If you are interested in learning how to become a part of T.U.N.E Camp please visit our web site or contact:

Bruce Gockowski
651-491-5163
Bruce.ultimatenature@gmail.com

See the ad on page 7 for more info!

The total cost this year is only \$450 (\$100 registration and \$350 enrollment) Check out the official website at www.tunecamp.info

The goal of TUNE Camp is to bring students a better understanding of the world around them, show them how to be empowered, and help them be able to make a change in their world. We strive to guide them to be stewards of the land and become the next generation of conservationists and ecologists.

Non-profit and Volunteered Based

We are a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization formed under the Lady Slippers Chapter of Pheasants Forever. Funding comes in part from the Chapters of Pheasants Forever, Trout Unlimited, Laughing Trout, and other organizations and people like yourselves. Groups provide donations and scholarships to help students come to camp.

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SATURDAY, MARCH 18TH, 2017

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Obsess with the obsessives
Regularly held from 6 to 8 pm.
Check Facebook & Online for Future Dates!

FISHING IS SPOKEN HERE.

Thursday, March 2nd - Indeed Brewing
711 15th Ave NE, Mpls, MN 55413
See the ad on page 9!

Friday, March 24th - Bent Paddle Brewing
1912 W Michigan St, Duluth, MN 55806



MNTU CHAPTER NEWS

Gitche Gumee Chapter

The Gitche Gumee chapter has had a busy fall and winter meeting schedule. The chapter recently wrapped up their first showing of the "F3T" the Fly Fishing Film Tour, which was held at the Clyde Iron Works event center in West Duluth on January 29th together with the Arrowhead Fly Fishers. We had great attendance, with over 250 tickets sold. Big thanks go out to the Wild Rivers Chapter of TU in Wisconsin for their assistance, as well as thanks to the Great Lakes Fly Shop, Superior Fly Angler, Bent Paddle Brewing and others that



A PACKED CLYDE IRON WORKS WELCOMED THE F3T TO DULUTH WITH GGTU

contributed items that were raffled to the crowd. We've got a busy late winter and spring schedule of programs coming up, we hope that you can make it over to join us. In particular, we invite the members from the now de-chartered Waybinabe Chapter to join in the festivities in the Duluth area if they have time to make the drive over. We hope to include them in a wide variety of upcoming meetings and events. Check out our events below, and "like" the chapter on Facebook to follow along with what we've got going on this season.

Upcoming GGTU Chapter Events

February 21st – AFF & GGTU Joint Meeting
Fishing Saltwater Flats – From the Keys to Honduras
Clyde Iron Works – Social at 6PM, Program at 7PM

March 9th – Fishing for North Shore Brook Trout
Hartley Nature Center – 7PM

March 24th – "Trout on Tap" at the Bent Paddle Brewery. Casual recreation, fly tying and drinking 6PM-8PM

Spring Fishing & Membership Meeting

April 13th – "State of the Steelhead"
Hartley Nature Center – 7PM

Jon Aspie

Hiawatha Chapter

Hiawatha Trout Unlimited (HTU) finished its annual Christmas party in December and we had a great turn out. We had pulled pork and everyone brought food to share. We raffled great items like an 8'5" 4wt. fly rod donated by Limit Creek Rod Company out of Spring Valley, Minnesota and pet supplies donated by Greg Goodnow, owner of Rochester Fish-N- Pets. Greg is our Trout in the Classroom (TIC) youth program coordinator. We currently have four high schools participating in the local Rochester area which include Mayo, Century, Chatfield and Plainview/Elgin/Millville High Schools.

During January's member meeting we showed a fly fishing movie on modern nymphing techniques in the European style. We had popcorn and beverages to go with it and, as the attached picture shows, had a great turn out.

HTU is gearing up for the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo March 17th through the 19th. We always look forward to getting together with good friends and like-minded people. The event will be held at Hamline University at 1536 Hewitt Ave. St. Paul, MN. 55104. If you're interested in helping with HTU's booth at the expo, contact us for more information.

Hiawatha Trout Unlimited Spring Conservation Fundraiser

April 8th will be Hiawatha's annual fundraiser. This year's event will be a film festival held at 125 Live. 125 Live is Rochester, MN's newest event center. Details as far as location and time can be found at www.hiawathatu.org Hiawatha Trout Unlimited will show films from the Minnesota Trout Unlimited (MNTU) fly fishing film and video showcase held annually at the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo. Regional streams will be the main focus. Come join HTU as we celebrate trout and fishing. Top quality raffle items will be on hand as well as snacks and beverages. Come join us!

Phil Pankow

Headwaters Chapter

Before presenting our trout and stream news, I have to recognize an amazing fall fishing season. One of the amazing rewards members acquire from belonging to TU is the long term educational spinoffs. Call it "Learning Expansion of Fishing Knowledge", new techniques, flies, equipment, species and places to fly fish.

Specifically I'm thinking of Esox. This October, November and ending December 3, yes December 3, a dozen TU big fly casters had beautiful weather on area lakes, hooking large numbers of quality big pike, some bass and a few muskies on big flies. (For details, tips, and techniques check out Great Waters Pike presentation, March 17th.

Clearwater River

After many years of hard work and the collaborative efforts of state and local TU, DNR fisheries and private land owners, natural reproduction of brown trout is being reported. Also fisheries fall survey work found several healthy 5" rainbows, the results of our "Trout in the Classroom" spring release efforts. There have also been more and more reports of 16"+ fish, many from individuals introduced to fly fishing by our 5th grade Fly Fishing program. Yes the stars are lining up! The last three years of bank stabilization is working and another fishing pier will be added this summer to the handicap trail section, making a total of five piers. Hopefully, additional funding will be coming for more stream restoration and fencing work.

Necktie River

A new brook trout spawning habitat study was initiated by Bemidji State University under the supervision of Tony Standera, Fisheries Specialist with the DNR. Aquatic Biology Fish Management students and Tony are identifying active brook trout spawning areas and studying all factors relating to success that could be replicated.

Cat Creek, Sucker Creek and the Kabekona River

Positive reports on natural reproduction and beautiful 15" fish come from John Sorenson, our stream restoration chair.

Straight River

Our regional blue ribbon brown trout stream, located just south west of Park Rapids, will get its 5th and potentially final helicopter tree drop this summer. The great success of this long-term 12 year project possibly illustrates what can happen when a private donor contributes a substantial and sustaining contribution for habitat restoration.

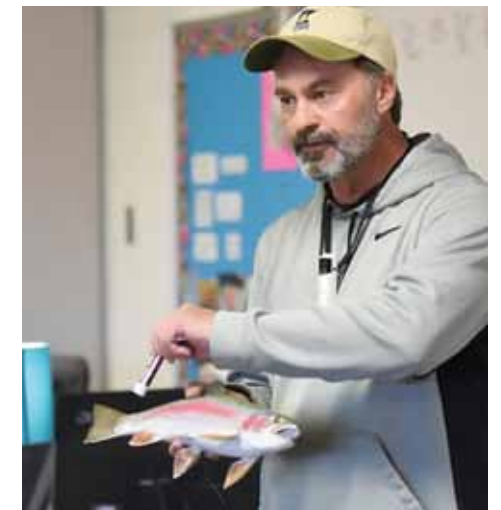
Women's Fly Fishing Retreat, June 2 and 3 – Val Wagner, our women's initiative chair, will once again host this popular workshop. (See article for details)

The Pike Hunt, also known as the Great Slime Event, is June 9 & 10. Pike fight fly style or bring a friend from the dark side and do jerk versus fly (no jerks in my boat). Don't miss this and bring your kids and spouse regardless of participation to Saturday night's fish fry. We tie the pike flies Friday night, Saturday morning we fish and catch, in the evening we fillet and fry delicious fresh pike. Price is \$45, which includes all materials and instruction for tying the fly, a great meal, a special Esox hat (extra hat \$20), plus unlimited tasting of two 5 gal special microbrew made just for the Pike Hunt. All profits go to chapter education projects.

Spring Membership Meeting

Tuesday, March 28 at CK Dudley's, 5:30 social, 6:00 order, 7:00 brief business meeting, 7:15 program, "Spring Trout and Steelhead: where, how and when." 30 places to fish trout within 45 miles of Bemidji, plus North Shore steelhead. Within a 3.5 hour drive from Bemidji there are many beautiful North Shore streams that offer the chance to hook a wild steelhead fresh from Lake Superior.

Bob Wagner



TONY STANDERA FROM THE MN DNR EXPLAINS THE LIFE HISTORY OF TROUT DURING A THE TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM PROGRAM FOR 5TH GRADE STUDENTS IN BEMIDJI, MN. THE HEADWATERS TIC PROGRAM CONTINUES TO GROW ANNUALLY. PHOTO COURTESY BEMIDJI PIONEER.

Mid-Minnesota Chapter

The Little Rock Creek habitat improvement project is continuing, and additional Lessard-Sams funding has been secured to move forward with work in the watershed. The MN DNR continues work on groundwater management in the area, with a recent meeting held on Jan. 25th. We need more help attending meetings and on the water. Contact the chapter president or call MNTU Executive Director John Lenczewski at 612-670-1629 to get involved.

Micah Barrett

MNTU CHAPTER NEWS



CRYSTALS FRAME A ROD AND FLY BOX ALONG A SE MINNESOTA TROUT STREAM IN THE 2017 WINTER TROUT FISHING SEASON. BRIAN SCHUMACHER PHOTO.

Twin Cities Chapter

While there are many challenges to our natural resources right now, we can celebrate a small success! Thanks to your emails, the MPCA will hold a public hearing and five more days of comments on the state's proposed changes to water quality rules. It's a lot of material to review, so we're splitting up the work among a group of us. If you can help, please send an email to Minnesota Trout Unlimited Executive Director John Lenczewski: jlenczewski@comcast.net and copy Dan Callahan: dan@twincitiesestu.org.

Free Intro to Fly Fishing & Monthly Chapter Meeting

Tuesday, February 28
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Wood Lake Nature Center
6710 Lakeshore Drive, Richfield MN

This is our free chapter event for the month. The public is welcome. Learn the very basics of fly fishing in a 30-minute presentation. We'll explain the different types of rods, reels and lines, different stages of insect life and the flies that imitate them, and the basics of casting, followed by Q&A. Every question is a good one, so don't be shy. Afterwards, come up and introduce yourself to the board members. We'd like to get to know you, and welcome you to our chapter.

Learn Fly Tying This Winter

Laughing Trout Fly Tying
Most Wednesdays
American Legion Post #118, 949 Wayzata Blvd E., Wayzata
No Charge

Many TCTU members belong to an informal group of fly tying and fly fishing enthusiasts known as Laughing Trout. They have tools and materials so you can try out the fun for free, and learn while doing.

Contact Paul Johnson with questions: PaulWaconia@gmail.com. Paul is a prolific and perfect tier, who donates many of his creations for our fundraising raffles. Thanks Paul!

The owners of our two most centrally-located fly shops (Bob Mitchell's and Mend) also have been very generous to us. They offer fly tying classes, tools and materials, books, advice, and some "open tie" times. Mend has "Alt Church" open fly tying on Sundays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Volunteer Opportunities

Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo
March 17-19, Hamline University, St. Paul

It's an official TU event. We'll need about 40 volunteers to run it. Will you help? You could volunteer for a four-hour shift

and get in free that day. We'll need some people the day before as well, to help exhibitors unload and set up, plus people at the front door for admissions, others to help guest speakers in the presentation rooms, and people to staff our Twin Cities Trout Unlimited booth. You can call or email the organizers, Carl Haensel and Jade Thomason, to get involved at (612) 562-9242, or info@greaterwaters-flyexpo.com

Trout in the Classroom Statewide Summit

March 17, Inver Hills Community College, Inver Grove Heights

Same day as first day of Expo, but this event will be done by about 2 p.m. or so. We run this watershed education program in 17 Minnesota schools. Students from across the state will gather here to share their watershed improvement projects, the success of raising trout from eggs in science classes, and hear from guest presenters. Could you help kids try fly casting and spin casting, or help in other ways? Yes? Great! Contact Benji Kohn, and say, "How can I help?" Email him: tictimn@gmail.com

Buckthorn Removal

We had multiple extremely successful outings late last fall removing invasive buckthorn along the Vermillion River. Plan on helping out with more this spring. Saturday, March 4th will be our next date, beginning at 9AM. Lunch is provided, so please help us get a good headcount by sending your RSVP to Habitat Restoration Chair Tony Nelson at: Tony@ligprint.com or calling 952-486-2282..

Dean Campbell

Win-Cres Chapter

The Win-Cres chapter hosted a successful wild game feed in December and raised funds to help support MNTU. The chapter will also use some of the funds raised to purchase a DR brush hog to clear paths along streams that have experienced habitat improvement.

Annual Membership Meeting

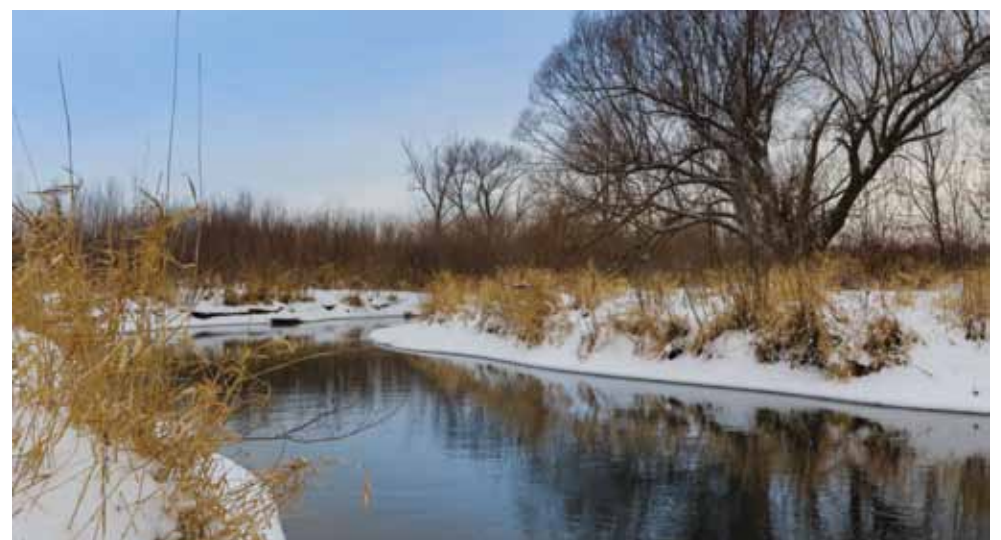
Win-Cres TU's Annual Meeting will be held in conjunction with the regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 22, 6:00pm, at Holzinger Lodge in Winona.

As spring approaches, work on Phase II along Garvin Brook will begin in earnest. Trees will be removed this winter and loads of rock will be delivered. Win-Cres members will help by building the sky hooks that will be placed in the stream.

Win-Cres, in cooperation with Winona Community Education, is sponsoring a trout fishing class this spring. The class will include topics like life in a stream, the life of a trout, and fly casting instruction. Win-Cres members will also help the Lewiston Sportsmen's Club with their outdoor education program when the fishing lessons begin in June. The chapter will also participate in Take A Kid Fishing Day at Whitewater State Park this summer.

The chapter will continue to support WSHS science teacher, Pete Weess, with his Trout in the Classroom project. The 500 brown trout are showing signs of healthy growth and learning to feed in their temporary home.

Joe Lepley



THE VERMILLION RIVER IN DAKOTA COUNTY, HOME TO LARGE WILD BROWN TROUT, FLOWS OPEN IN THE WINTER DESPITE COLD WINTER TEMPS. LOOK FOR UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP THIS METRO STREAM IN 2017.

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All members also receive this publication as well as TROUT, TU's national magazine. Other benefits include a 16-month TU calendar, car rental & hotel discounts and more. TU offers a variety of membership categories.

Visit www.tu.org today to sign up.

OR SUBSCRIBE!

For those of you who are members in other chapters in other states, or who would like to directly support MNTU's newsletter, we are now welcoming subscribers to the newsletter. Sign up to get three colorful issues annually. Mail in this form today to receive the next issue arriving this summer in June!

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WINTER LIGHT IN THE CLOUDS ON A BWCAW LAKE - HANNAH MILLER PHOTO

REELING IT IN

Where is the Boundary?

By Hannah Miller

Where lies the boundary? In the BWCA in January, day and night seem no longer defined by light and dark; clear blue night is separated from clear blue day by a porcelain cloud occluding the horizon. The boundary of trees rests somewhere between lake and sky, but it is seen only in my mind's eye as I walk to the middle of the lake to put down lines.

There is a wall between water and vapor at this time of year, a solid barrier of ice between up and down, arid and aqueous. But the soft tracks that trace my path from shore well up wet behind me. In the middle of the lake, I toe my way down to hard mineral, white and opaque. A few yards further, the lake's glass ceiling bows black and clear. This is where I will build my window. With the turn of a screw, the wall is perforated, and the water surges.

I am fishing for lake trout for the first time in my life. It is also Inauguration Day. I am not sure if anyone sitting in the rain in D.C. is thinking about augers, but I enjoy a private irony of the kind that often besets one in the quiet of the wilderness. I drill another hole in the wall of ice. I may need this skill for other walls, and I consider it good practice for what is to come.

And what is to come, exactly, belongs somewhere in that opal cloud that still hangs on the horizon. We talk of bound-

aries, but what are our limits? There is a silencing order on the nation's science and land management agencies, and this month, the U.S. House of Representatives made it easier to sell off federal lands. A spokeswoman for the House Natural Resources Committee spoke of public lands as "a significant burden for the surrounding communities," citing their "disrepair." Out there on the lake, I look around me at the pristine neglect and feel a tug.

A call to action can come in many forms. That day out in the wilderness, it came in the form of a lake trout older than I, possibly older than the Wilderness Act that protects its waters. It was young at the same time our nascent understanding of human impact bred a spirit of environmental legacy. Neither maturation was ever inevitable.

Out in the grayscale that is winter in the Boundary Waters, a special imagination is required. In the mind's eye, a fog becomes a horizon line, a tension becomes the interest of an invisible fish. I can imagine my way into successful navigation and an unprecedented catch, and suddenly the cold is real and the spray from a fin catches my face. We need to splash water in the face of our latent imaginations if we are to navigate into a secure future for our public lands. On the other side of thick ice there dwells a new generation ready, perhaps, to attest to our success.

Donate to MNTU!

Minnesota TU is the leading voice, your voice, advocating for coldwater fisheries and watersheds in Minnesota and the region. Our effective advocacy work and successful habitat grant writing efforts **cannot continue without your direct financial support of Minnesota TU**. We receive none of the donations raised from TU's direct mail and other fundraising efforts, and the small portion of your membership dues we receive is less than the cost to print and mail this newsletter. We need direct support from you - members and non-members alike - to keep us working effectively for you, your family and your friends. Every dollar of your donation will be used here in Minnesota.

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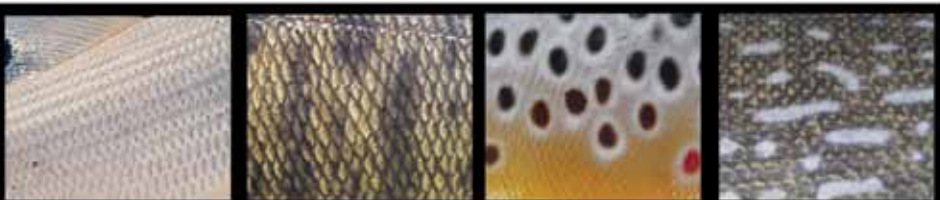
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